



California Research Bureau

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A Comparison of the Growth in Property and Sales Tax Bases for 218 Cities in California, 1980-1999

By Martha Jones, Ph.D.

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MAY 2004

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Data Sources:

State Board of Equalization, *Taxable Sales in California (Sales and Use Tax)*, *Annual Report*. The 218 cities chosen for analysis were the cities with taxable sales data published for 1980-81, 1983-84, 1986-87, 1990-91, 1993-94, 1997-98 and 1999-2000.

California State Controller, *Financial Transactions Concerning Cities in California*, Annual Reports from various years.

Acknowledgements:

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Over the last 30 years, voter-initiated propositions such as Propositions 13 and 218 have reduced local governments' ability to raise tax revenue. In addition, in the early 1990s, Governor Wilson and the Legislature diverted a large percentage of property tax revenues from local governments to education, often called the "ERAF shift." This loss of property tax revenues by local governments has resulted in their increasing dependence on sales tax revenues, which are more volatile. Moreover, it has increased the "fiscalization of land-use decisions" and competition between cities for retail stores. In search of sales tax revenue, cities tend to favor retail development at the expense of housing.

Property/sales tax swaps are one way to restructure local government finance in an attempt to correct some of these problems. Different swap mechanisms have been proposed over the years, most recently AB1221 (Campbell/Steinberg). In its June 2003 Options Report, the *Commission on Tax Policy in the New Economy* also considered whether to recommend a property/sales tax swap as a tax reform proposal.

Under AB1221, in the base fiscal year, each city and county would lose a portion of the locally- levied sales tax and gain an equal dollar amount of the property tax, diverted from the ERAF fund.² The local sales and use tax rate would be reduced from one percent to 0.5 percent for cities and counties.³ In order to maintain revenue neutrality, the state sales tax rate would be increased from five percent to 5.5 percent, and these funds would be used to reimburse each county's ERAF fund for the decrease in property taxes.

The AB1221 swap would be revenue neutral in the base fiscal year. Its impact in future years would depend on the differential growth rates of property and sales tax revenues in each local jurisdiction, and on changes in land use patterns. A number of recent analyses have shown that California's major tax bases have grown at different rates over the past two decades.⁴ The chart on the following page shows the inflation-adjusted, cumulative growth of net assessed property valuation and of taxable sales for California since 1980.⁵ Net assessed property value has grown more quickly and is more stable than taxable sales. Thus, proponents of the swap argue that historical patterns and economic trends suggest that California local governments on the whole would be better off with more property tax and less sales tax.

This CRB report includes graphs for 218 individual cities showing the growth in property and sales tax bases: net assessed valuation and taxable sales. The critical comparison is

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¹ "ERAF" refers to the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund.

² See the bill analysis for AB1221, 6/4/2003 at http://www.leginfo.ca.gov for further details.

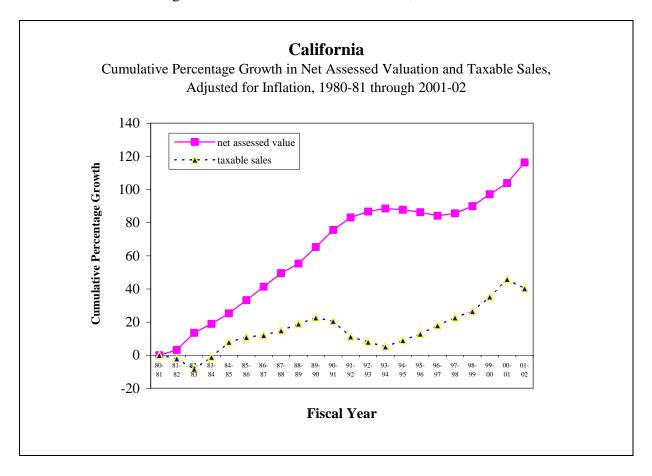
³ Counties also levy an additional 0.25 percent for county transportation funds.

⁴ Steve Levy, "Analysis of California's Three Major Tax Bases," July 8, 2003 http://www.ccsce.com; Michael Coleman, "AB1221, Fiscal and Policy Implications for Cities," April 11, 2003, http://www.californiacityfinance.com/AB1221.pdf.

League of California Cities, http://www.cacities.org/doc.asp?intParentID=4337; Speaker's Commission on State/Local Govt. Finance, 2000, http://speaker.metroforum.org/links.html.

⁵ Beginning in 1980-81, this chart shows the cumulative growth rate of each trend after adjusting for inflation. For net assessed value and taxable sales, the growth rates for each year shown on the graph are calculated using 1980-81 values as a base.

how these tax bases have grown over time. Similar to the statewide trends, net assessed value in most cities has grown much faster than taxable sales, and is also less volatile.



In July 2003, the State adopted a modified form of this tax swap proposal, often referred to as the "Triple Flip," in its 2003-04 budget.⁶ According to the Legislative Analyst's Office:

Beginning in 2004-05, the budget package temporarily redirects a share of the local sales tax (equal to ½ of one percent of taxable sales) to the state to use to repay the deficit reduction bonds. The budget package offsets local sales tax losses (almost \$2.5 billion in 2004-05) by redirecting to cities and counties a commensurate amount of property taxes from the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF). Increased state education apportionments, in turn, will mitigate K-14 district revenue losses associated with the redirection of ERAF monies. This swap of sales for property taxes ends after the deficit reduction bonds are repaid.⁷

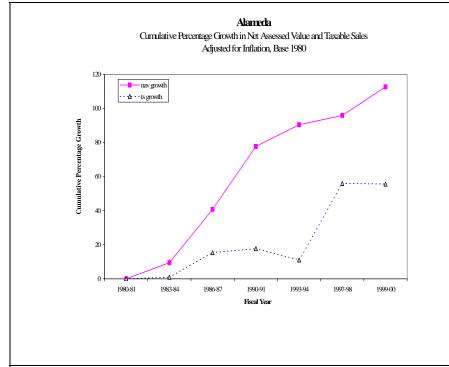
A crucial difference between the Triple Flip swap as enacted in the budget and the swap as proposed by AB1221 is that in the Triple Flip swap, the additional amount of property tax revenue allocated to local governments each fiscal year equals the amount collected

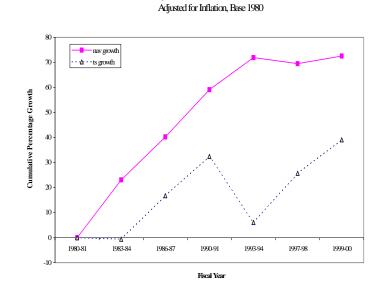
⁶ ABX1 7, Section 10, 1st Special Session, August 2, 2003.

⁷ http://www.lao.ca.gov/2003/major features 03-04/major features 03-04.pdf, see p. 25.

from the ½ cent sales tax. This means the Triple Flip swap is revenue neutral for each city and county every year it is in effect. Under AB1221, revenue neutrality only occurs in the base year. In subsequent years, differential growth of the sales and property tax bases would determine how each city and county's tax revenues would grow.

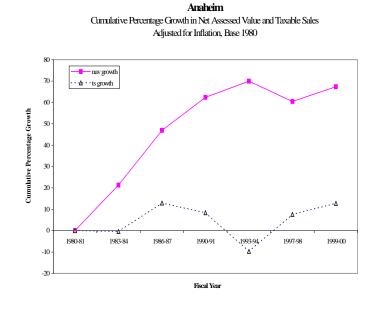
The Triple Flip may make AB1221's proposed property/sales tax swap unlikely for as long as the Triple Flip remains in effect. But the question remains: After the Triple Flip ends, should local revenues revert to the arrangement that existed before the FY 2003-04 state's budget, or should an arrangement such as the swap proposed in AB1221 be the replacement?

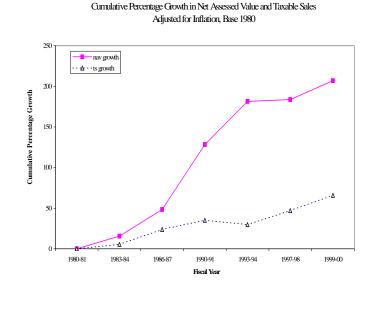




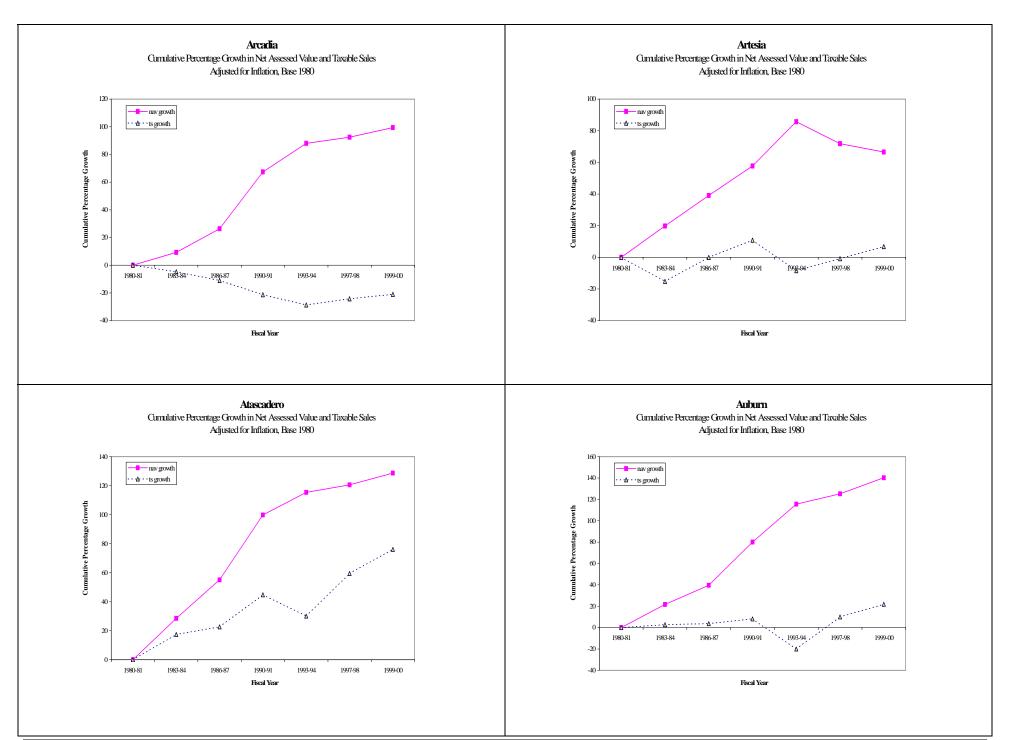
Albambra

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales





Antioch



Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 nav growth - ∆r · · ts growth Cumulative Percentage Growth 20

1980-81

1983-84

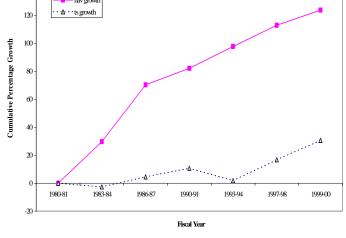
1986-87

Azusa

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 nav growth · Δ···ts growth 120 -100

Bakersfield



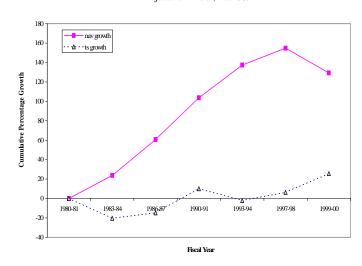
Baldwin Park Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

1990-91

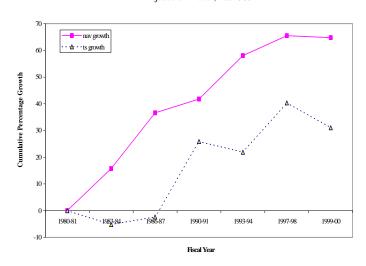
Fiscal Year

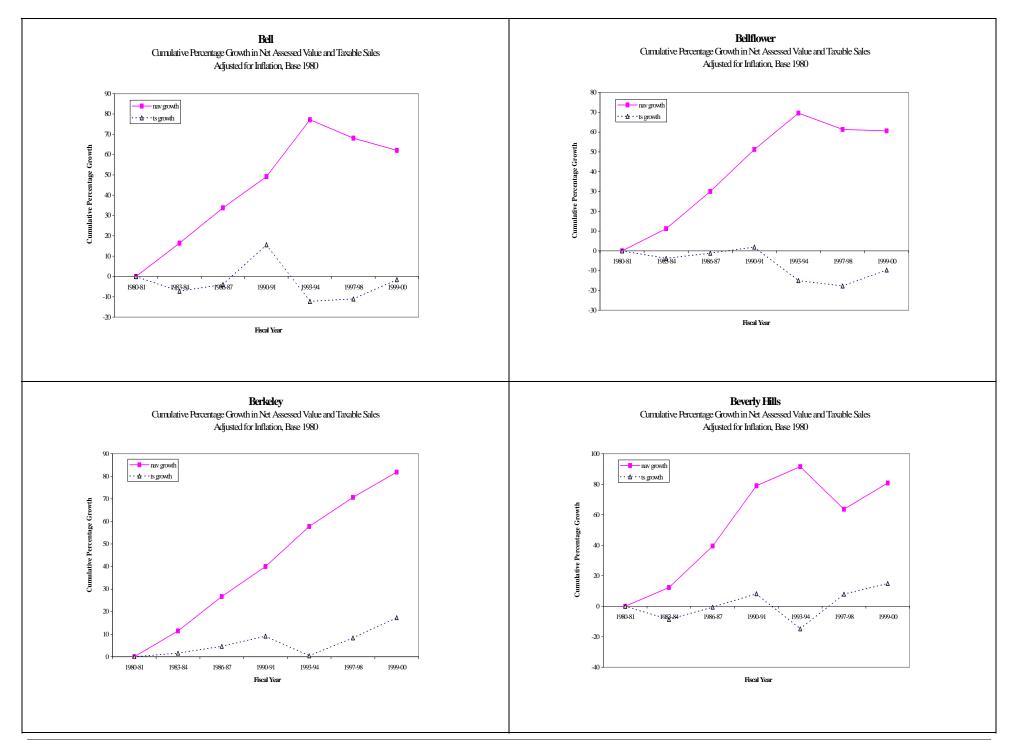
1997-98

1999-00



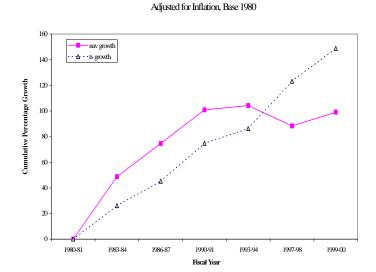
Barstow Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980





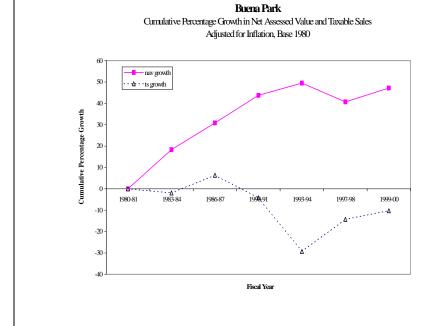
Blythe

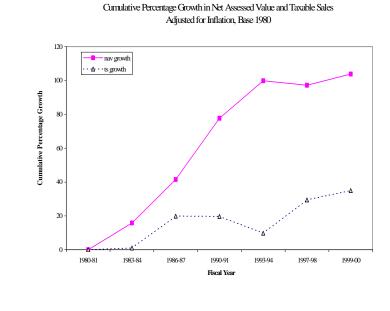
Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales



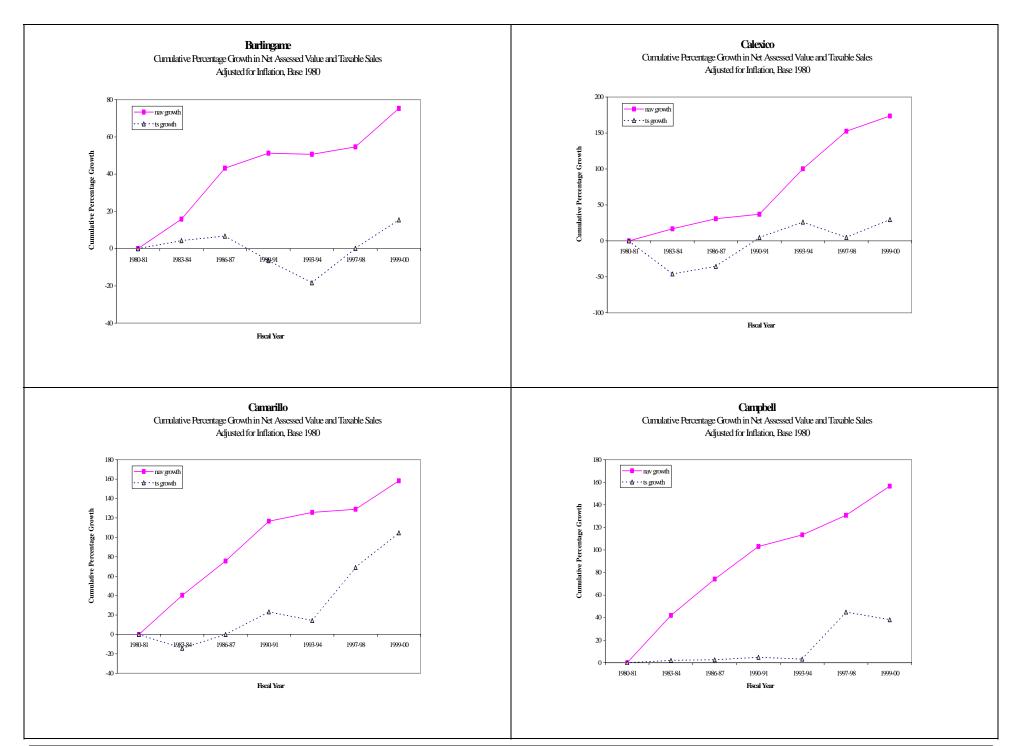
Brea

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

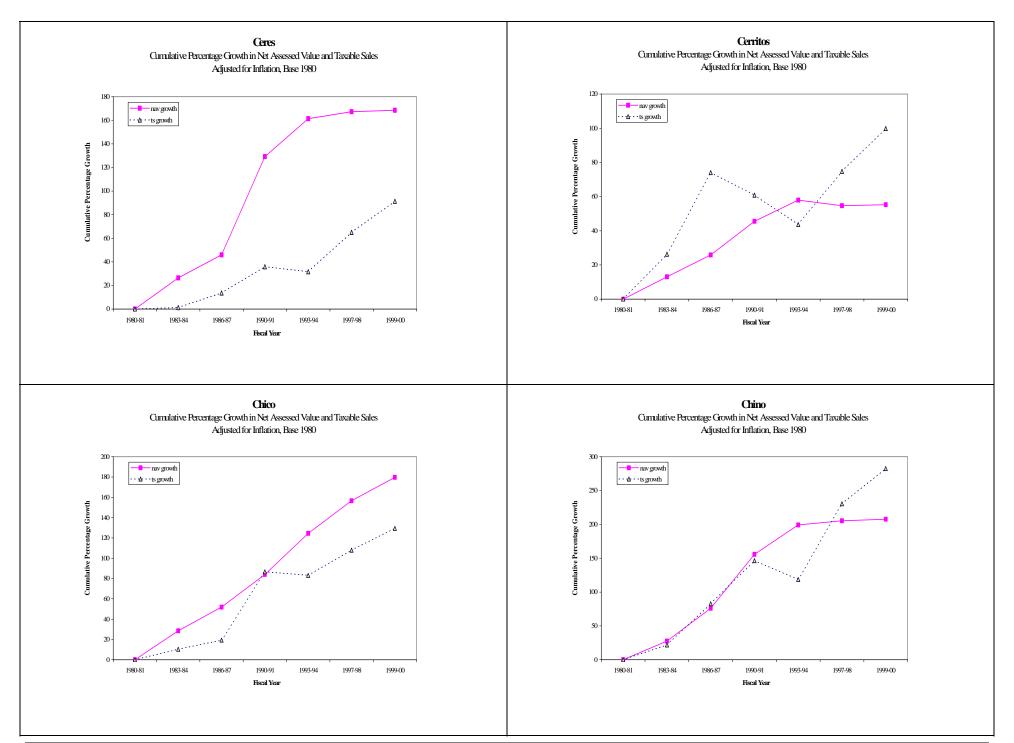


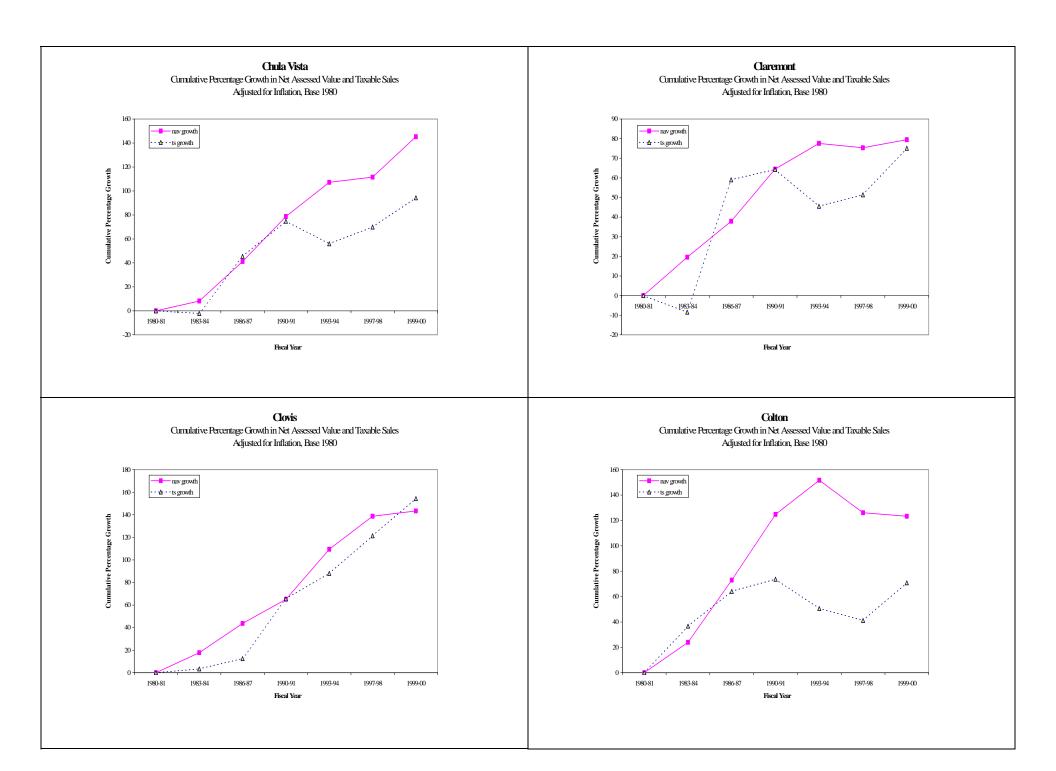


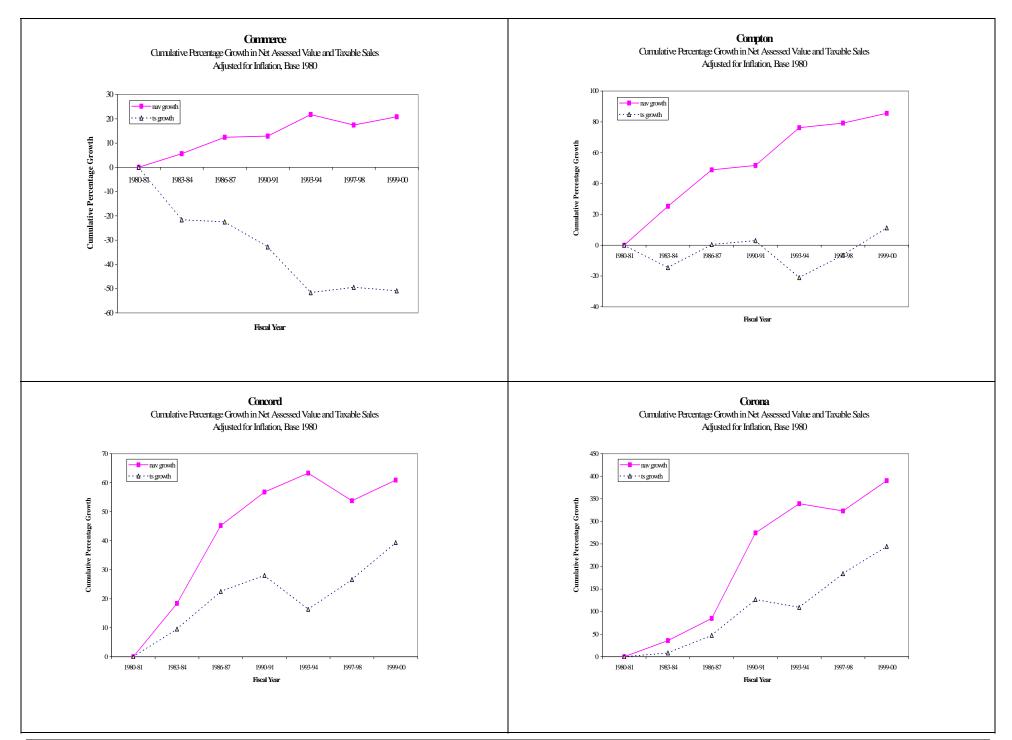
Burbank



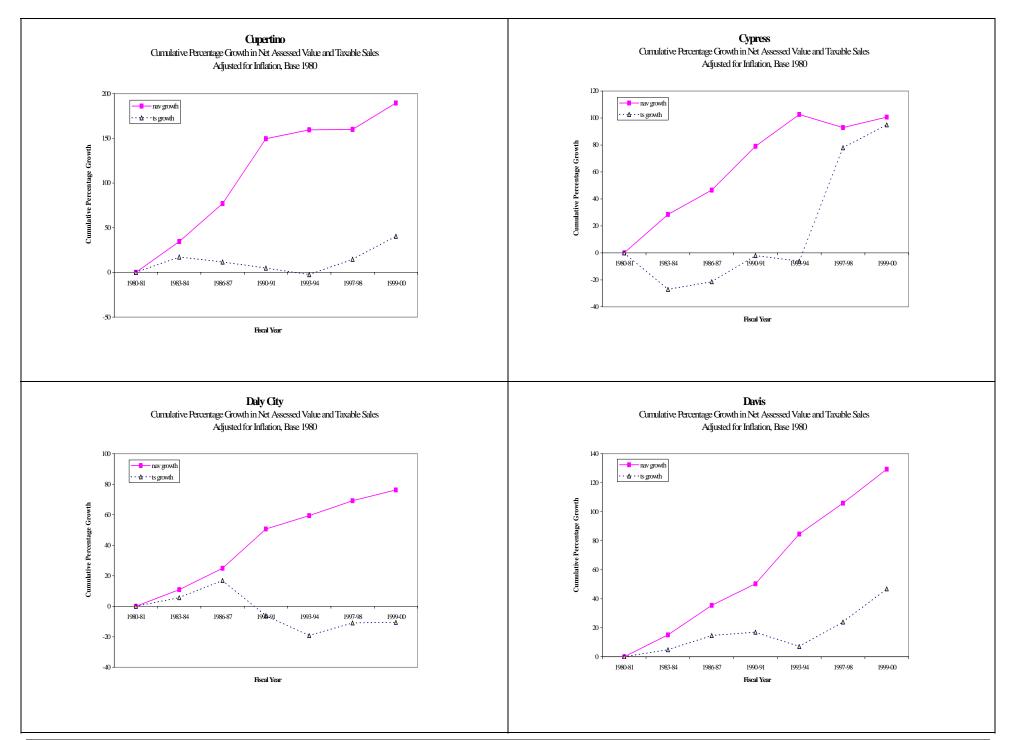
Capitola Carlsbad Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 nav growth - ☆ - - ts growth · ☆ · · ts growth 120 200 -Cumulative Percentage Growth Cumulative Percentage Growth 1983-84 1999-00 1980-81 1983-84 1986-87 1990-91 1993-94 1997-98 1999-00 Fiscal Year Fiscal Year Carmel-by-the-Sea Carson Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 nav growth nav growth · ☆ · · ts growth - ☆ · · ts growth 140 -Cumulative Percentage Growth Cumulative Percentage Growth 120 -100 40 18-0891 1983-84 1990-91 1999-00 1993-94 1993-94 1980-81 1983-84 1986-87 1990-91 1999-00 Fiscal Year Fiscal Year

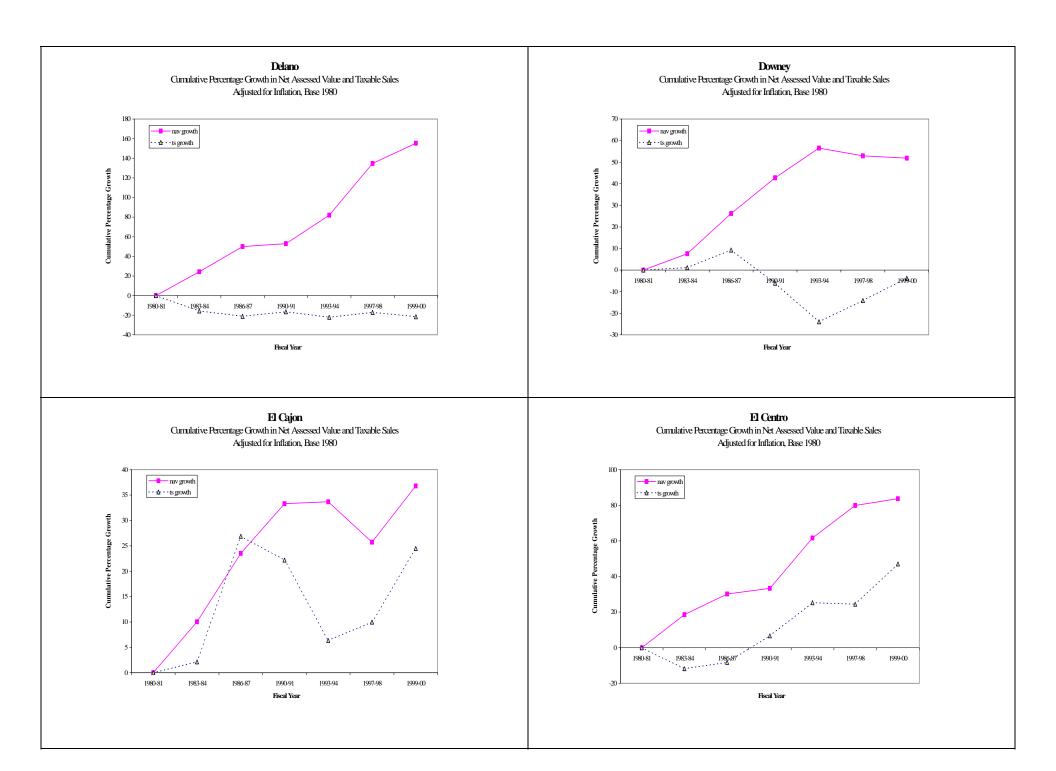


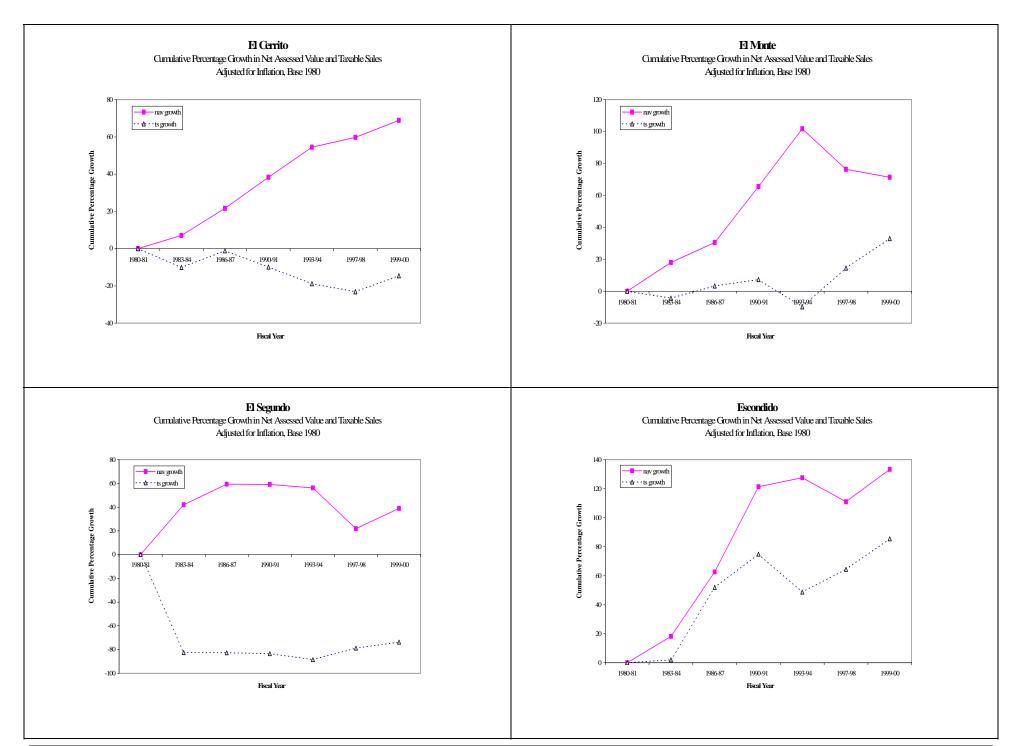




Corte Madera Costa Mesa Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 2500 nav growth nav growth · ▲ · · ts growth · ☆ · · ts growth 100 2000 Cumulative Percentage Growth Cumulative Percentage Growth 1000 -500 20 -1980-81 1983-84 1986-87 1999-00 1980-81 1983-84 1986-87 1990-91 1993-94 1997-98 1999-00 Fiscal Year Fiscal Year Culver City Covina Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 nav growth nav growth · ☆ · · ts growth · ☆ · · ts growth Cumulative Percentage Growth Cumulative Percentage Growth 20 1988-84 1980-81 Fiscal Year Fiscal Year







Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

50

10
198081

1988-84

1988-85

199091

1998-94

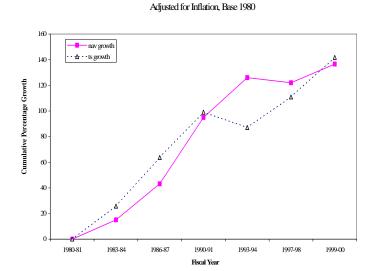
1998-98

1999-00

Fiscal Year

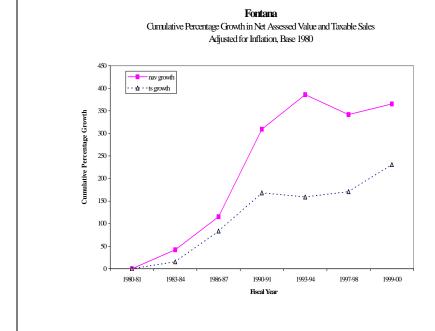
Eureka

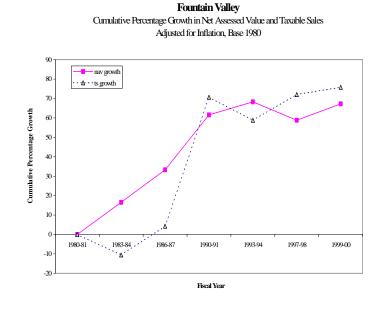
Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

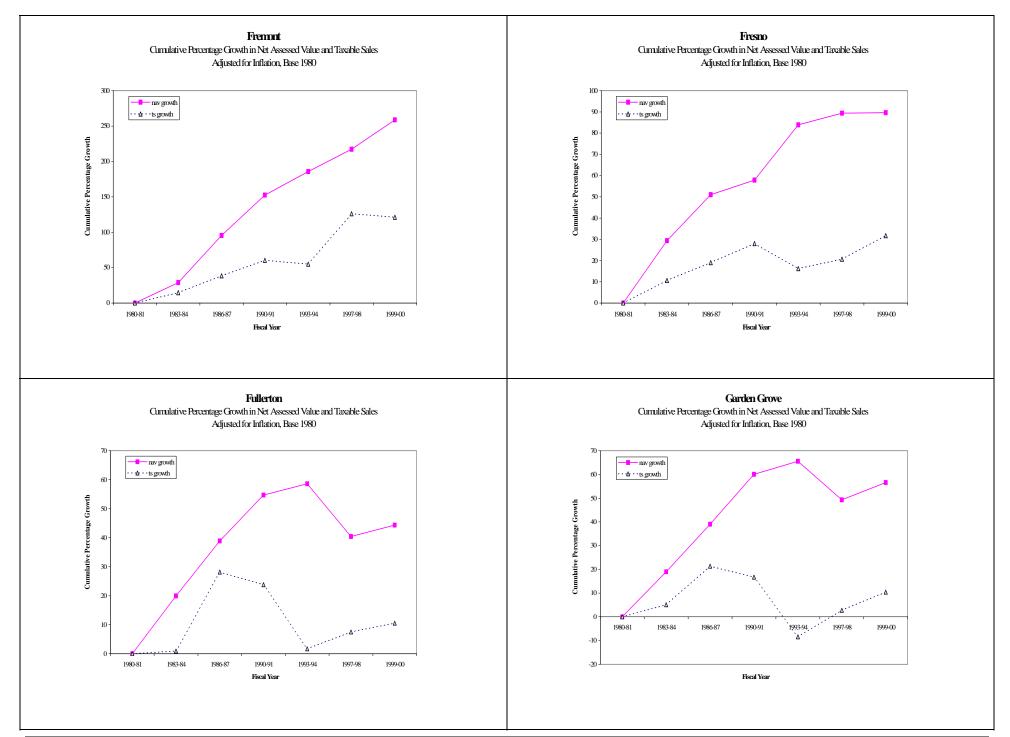


Fairfield

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales



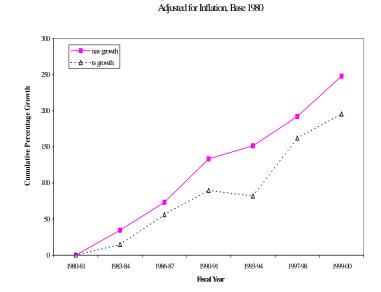




Glendale

Gardena

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales



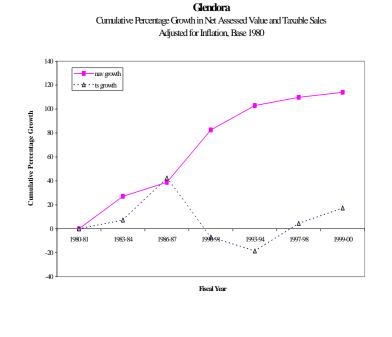
Gilroy

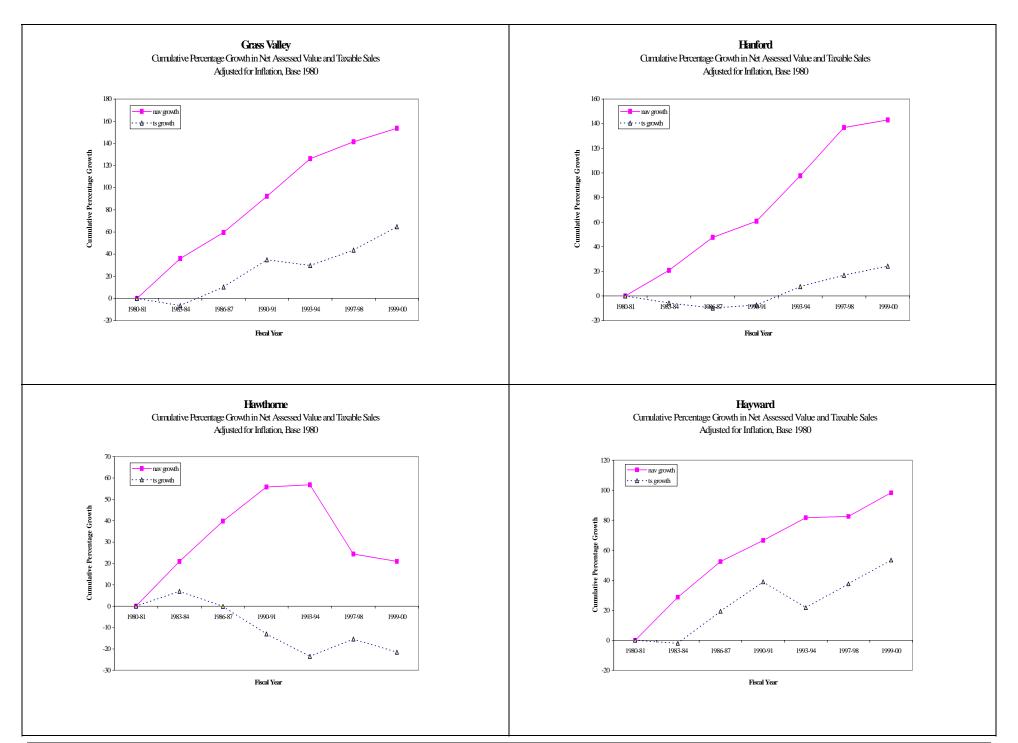
Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales
Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

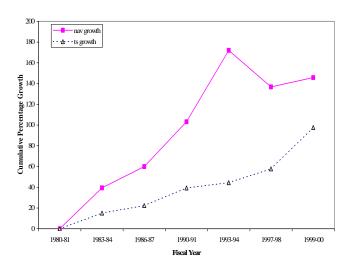
120
100
100
100
100
100
100
1980-81
1983-84
1986-87
1990-91
1997-98
1999-00

Fiscal Year



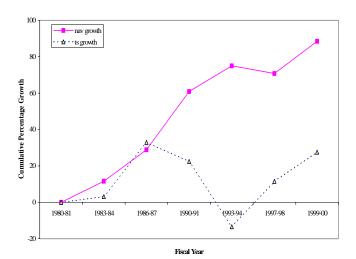


HernetCumulative Percentage Crowth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales
Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

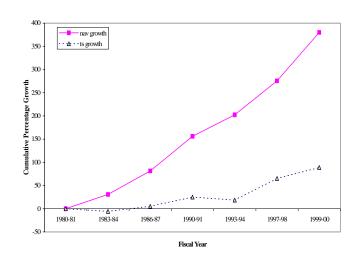


Hermosa Beach

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

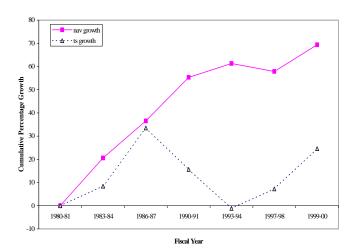


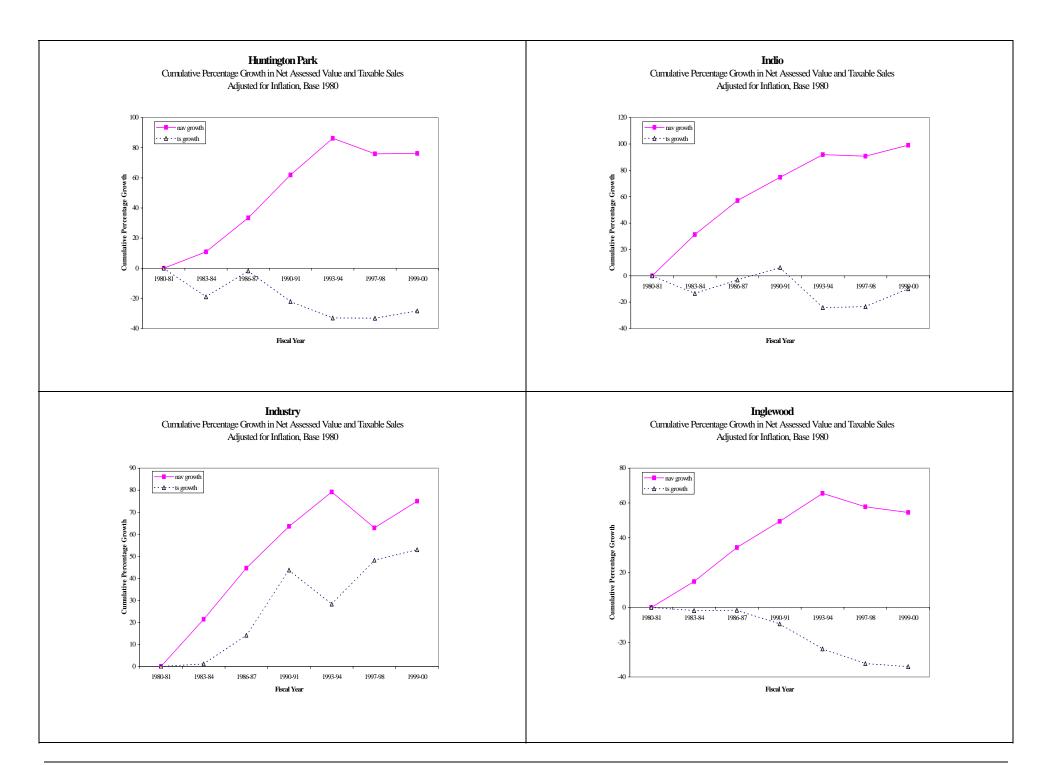
HollisterCumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales
Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980



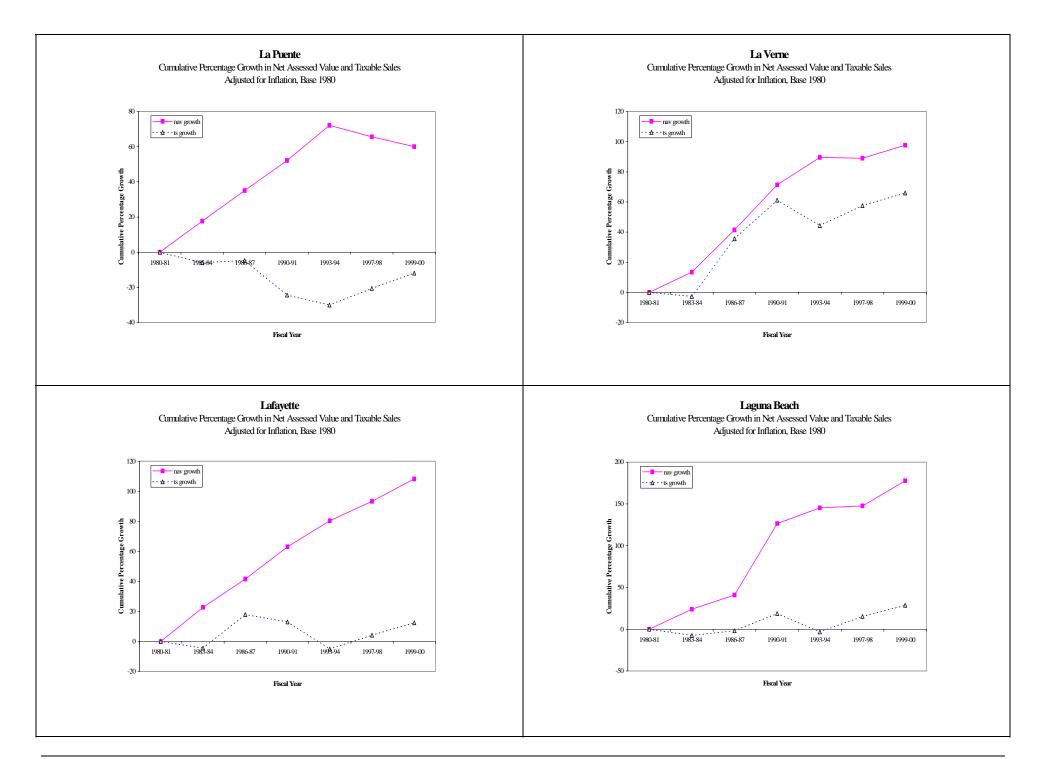
Huntington Beach

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980





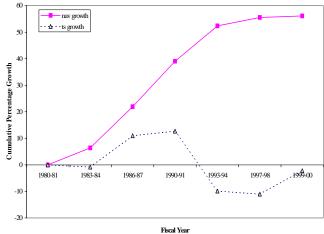
La Habra Irvine Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 nav growth nav growth · ★ · · ts growth · ☆ · · ts growth 200 Cumulative Percentage Growth 1983-84 1980-81 1986-87 -10 1980-81 1983-84 1986-87 1990-91 1993-94 1997-98 1999-00 Fiscal Year Fiscal Year La Mesa La Mirada Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 nav growth nav growth - ☆ - · ts growth · ▲ · · ts growth 1980-81 1993-94 1999-00 -10 -20 -1980-81 1983-84 1986-87 1990-91 1993-94 1997-98 1999-00 -30 -Fiscal Year Fiscal Year



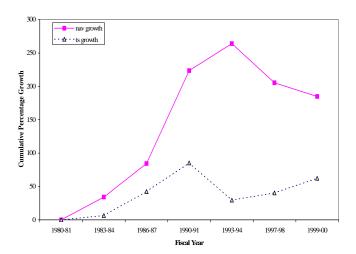
Lakewood

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

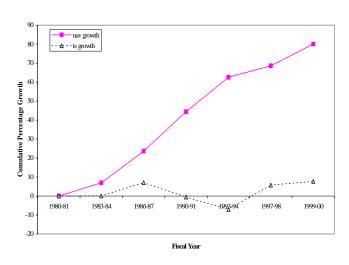
Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980



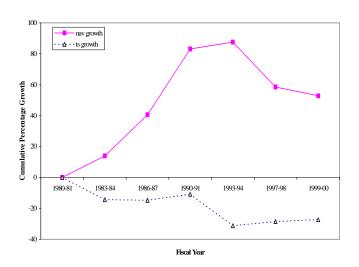
Lancaster
Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales
Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

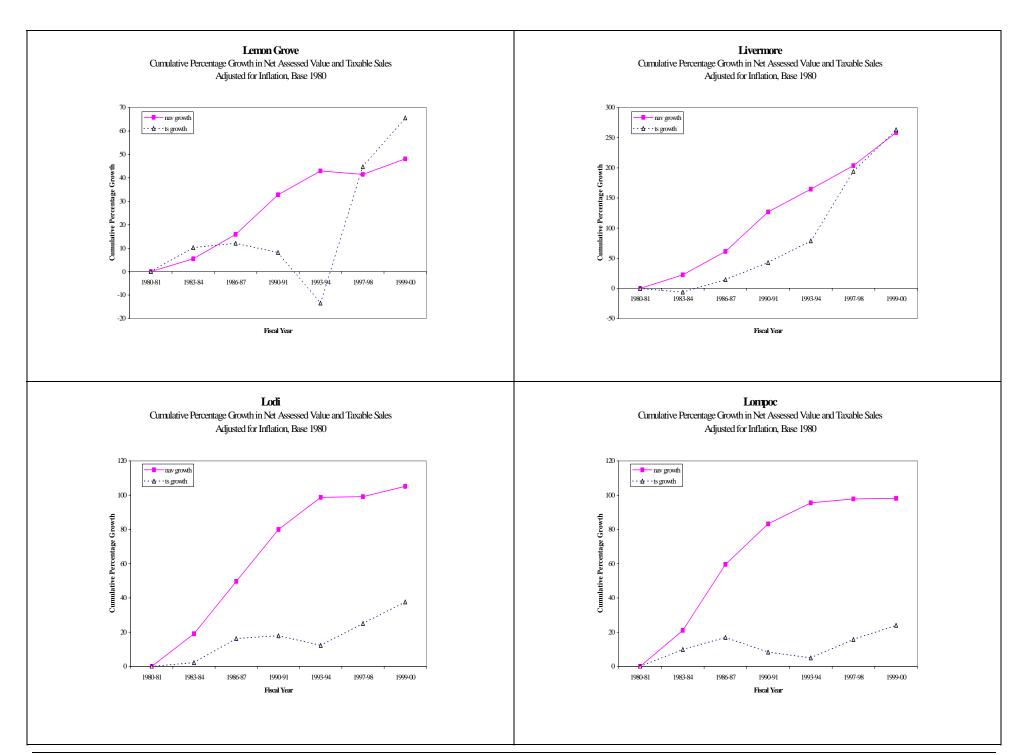


Larkspur Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980



Lawndale
Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales
Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980





60
50
40
50
40
1980-81
1980-81
1980-87
1980-91
1993-94
1997-98
1999-00
40
Fiscal Year

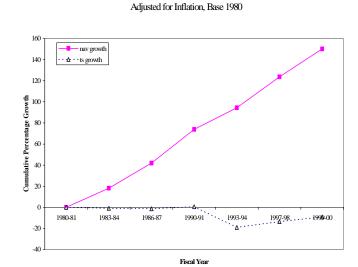
Los Angeles

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

Long Beach

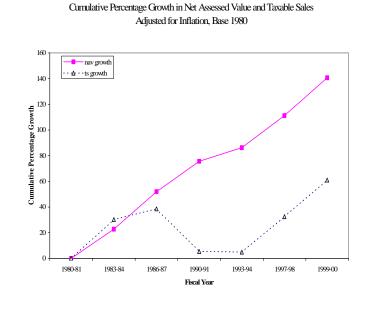
Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

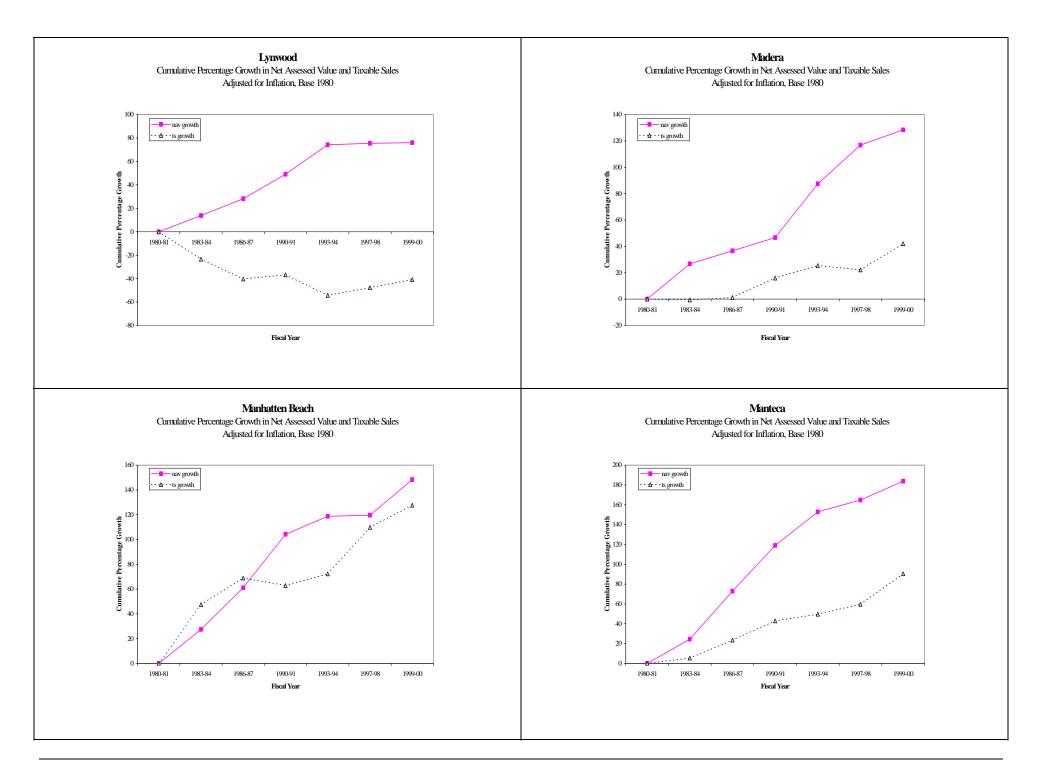


Los Altos

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales



Los Gatos



Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

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Merced

Marysville

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

Fiscal Year

Mill Valley

Menlo Park

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales
Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

90

90

10

10

1980-81

1983-84

1986-87

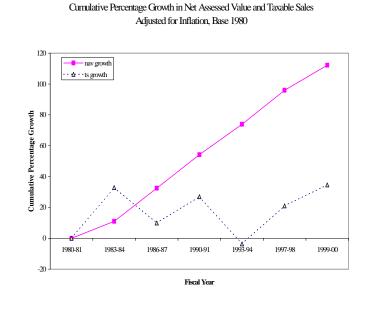
1990-91

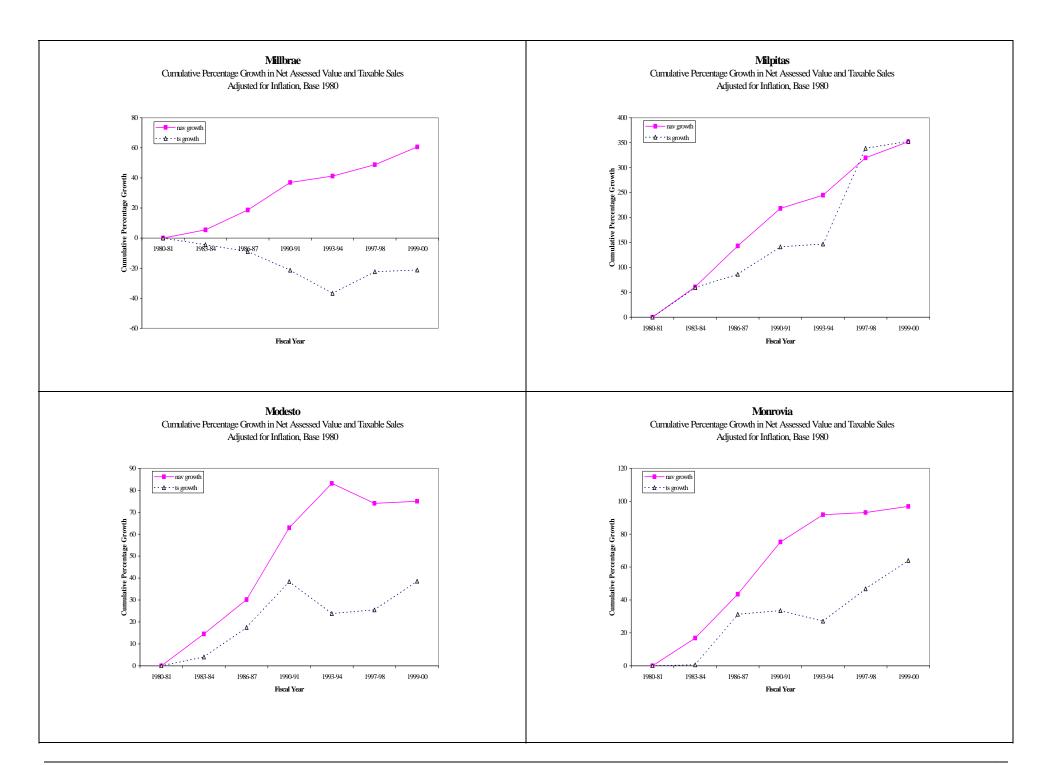
1993-94

1997-98

1999-00

Fiscal Year





Montclair

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

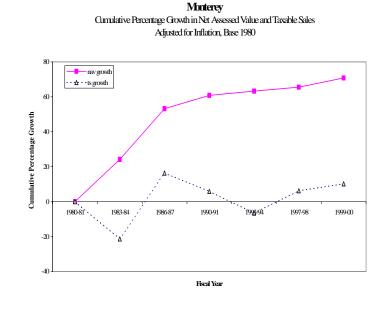
Fiscal Year

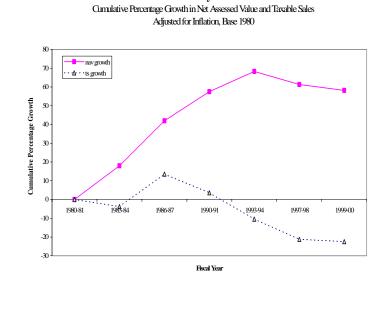
Monterey Park

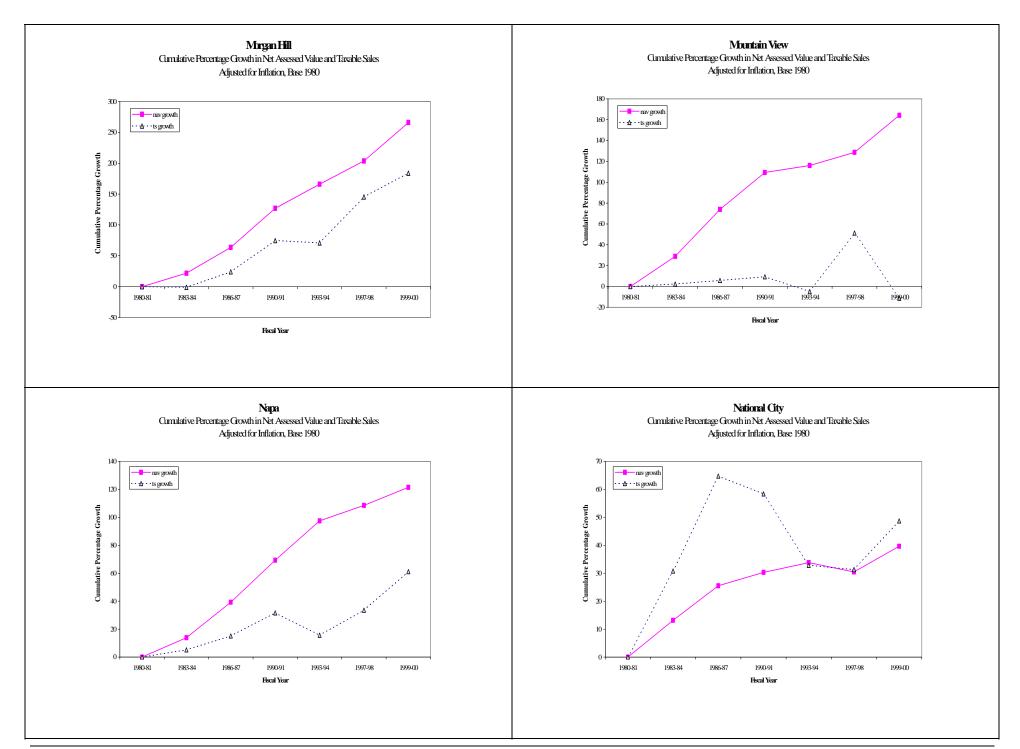
Montebello

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

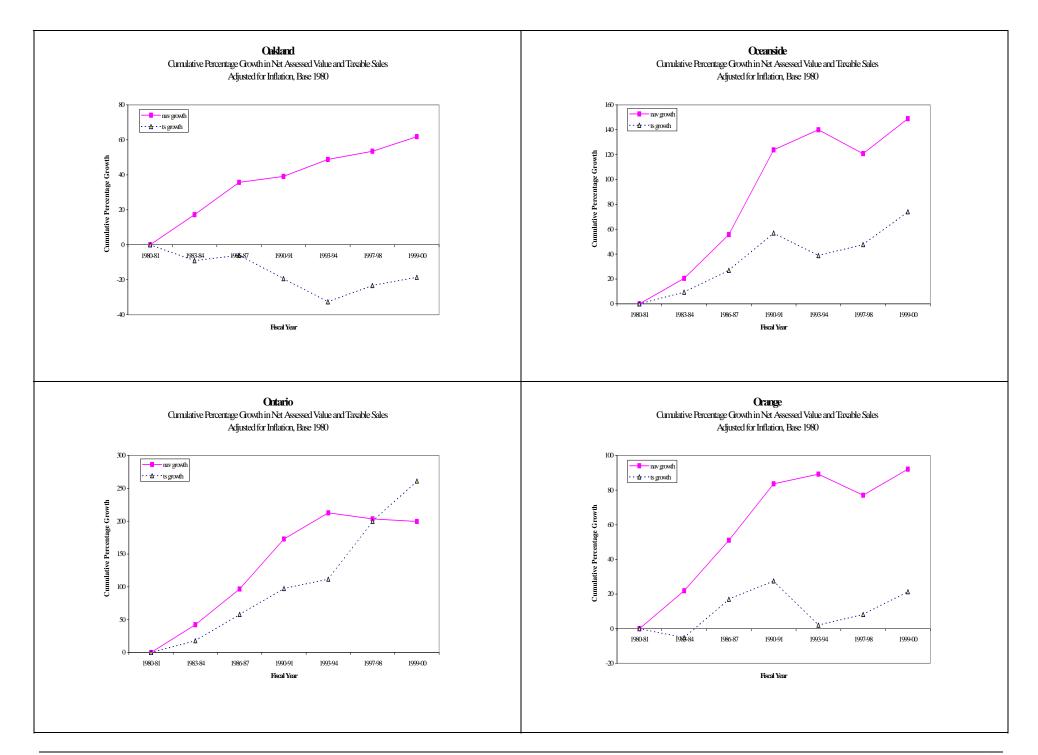
Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980



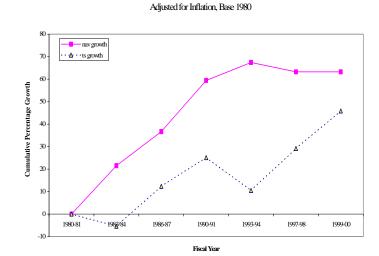




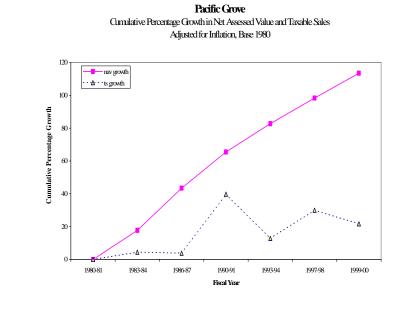
Newport Beach Newark Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 nav growth · ☆ · · ts growth · ☆ · · ts growth 200 -Cumulative Percentage Growth Cumulative Percentage Growth 20 50 -1980-81 1983-84 1986-87 1990-91 1999-00 1980-81 1983-84 1986-87 1990-91 1993-94 1997-98 1999-00 Fiscal Year Fiscal Year Norwalk Novato Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 nav growth · ☆ · · ts growth 100 Cumulative Percentage Growth Cumulative Percentage Growth 1983-84 1986-87 1990-91 Fiscal Year 1980-81 1983-84 1993-94 1997-98 1999-00 1986-87 1990-91 Fiscal Year

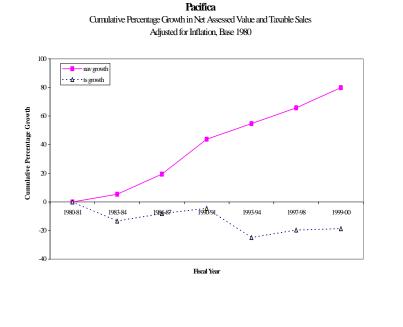


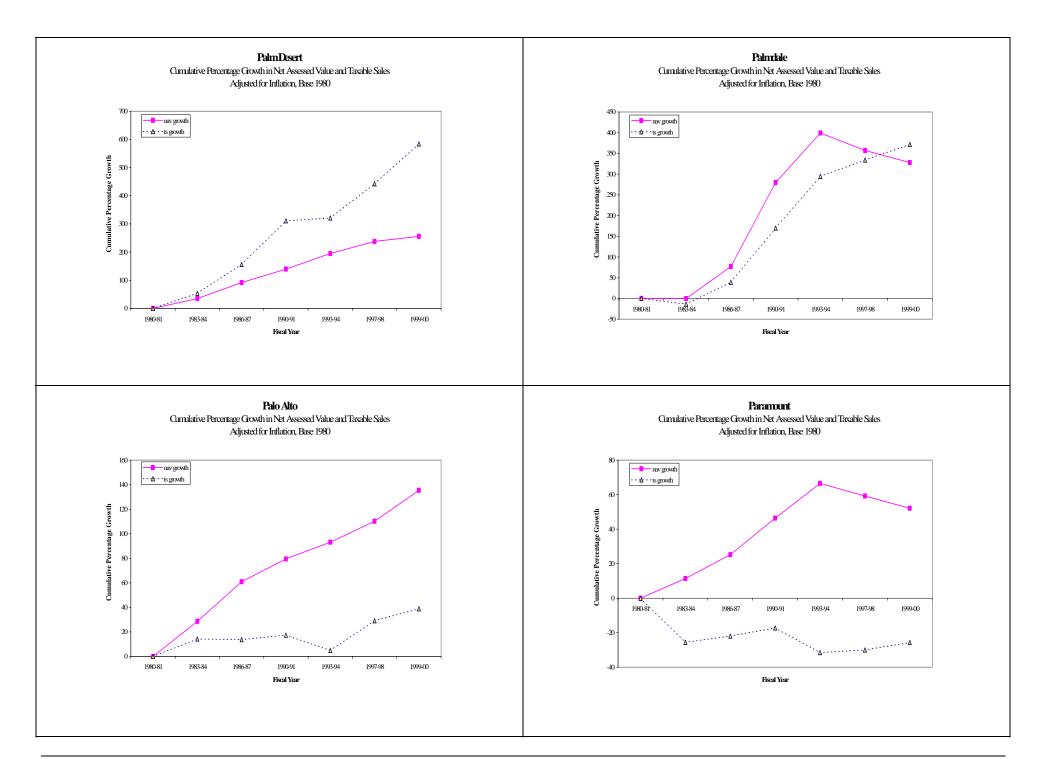
Oroville
Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales



Oxnard



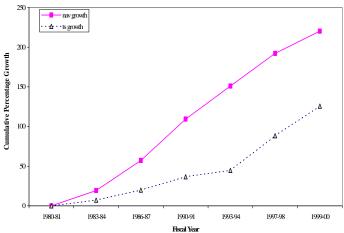




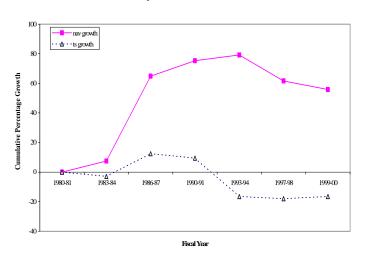
Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

Pasadena

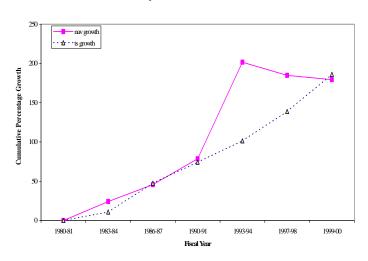
Petaluma
Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales
Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

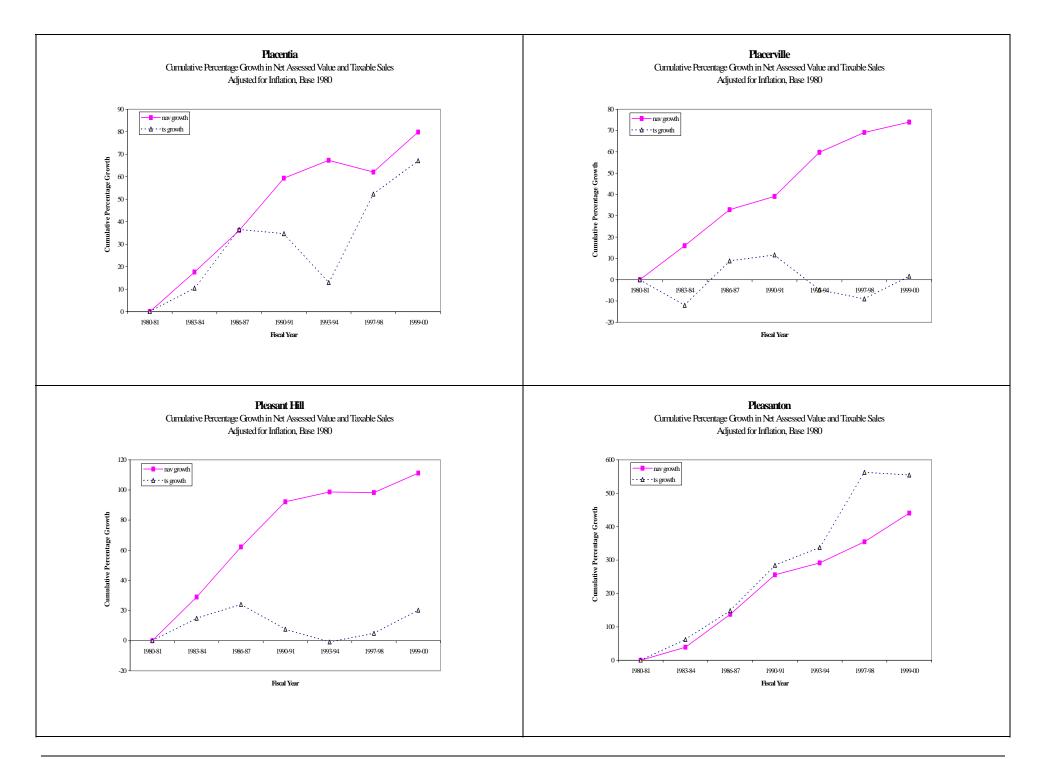


Pico Rivera Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980



Pittsburg
Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales
Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980





Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

140

120

100

100

100

100

1980-81

1983-84

1986-87

1990-91

1993-94

1997-98

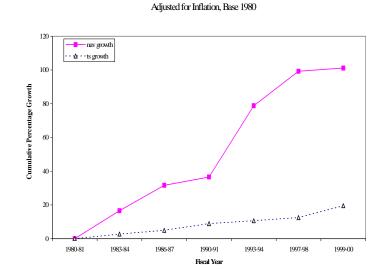
1999-00

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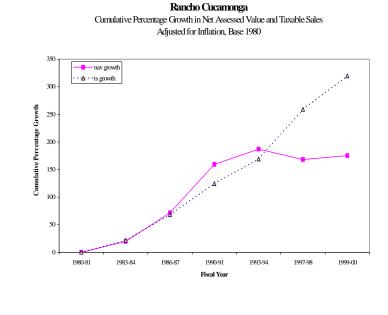
Fiscal Year

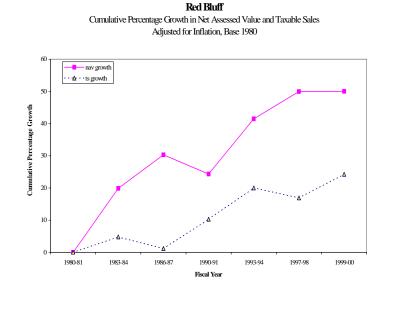
Pomona

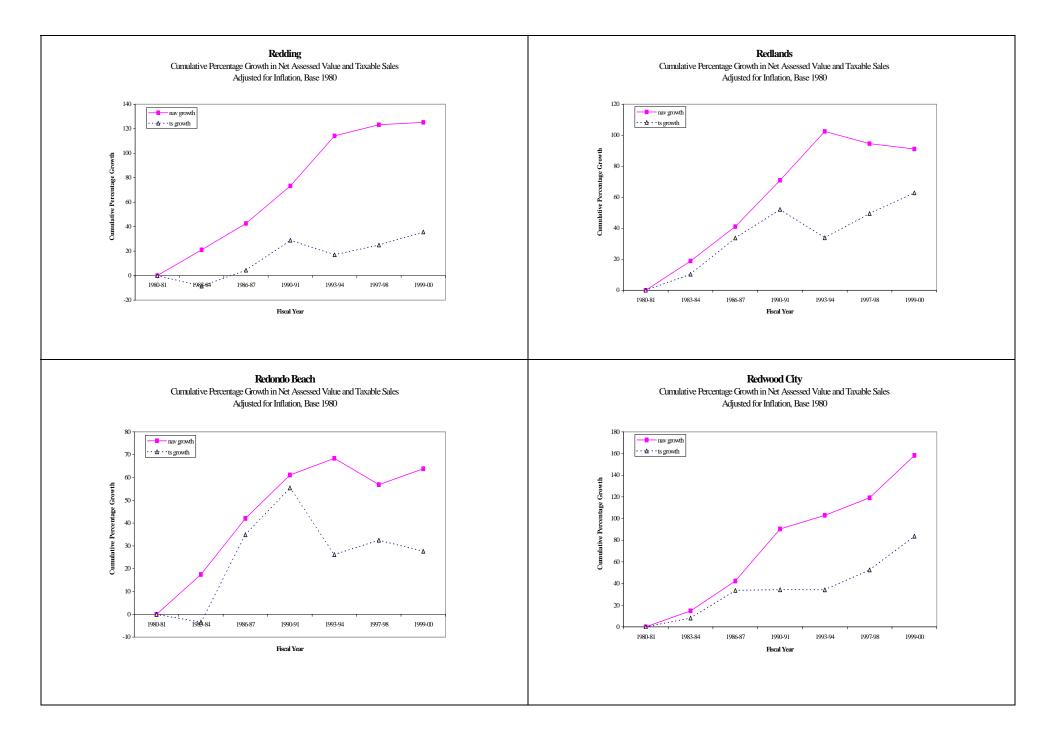
Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

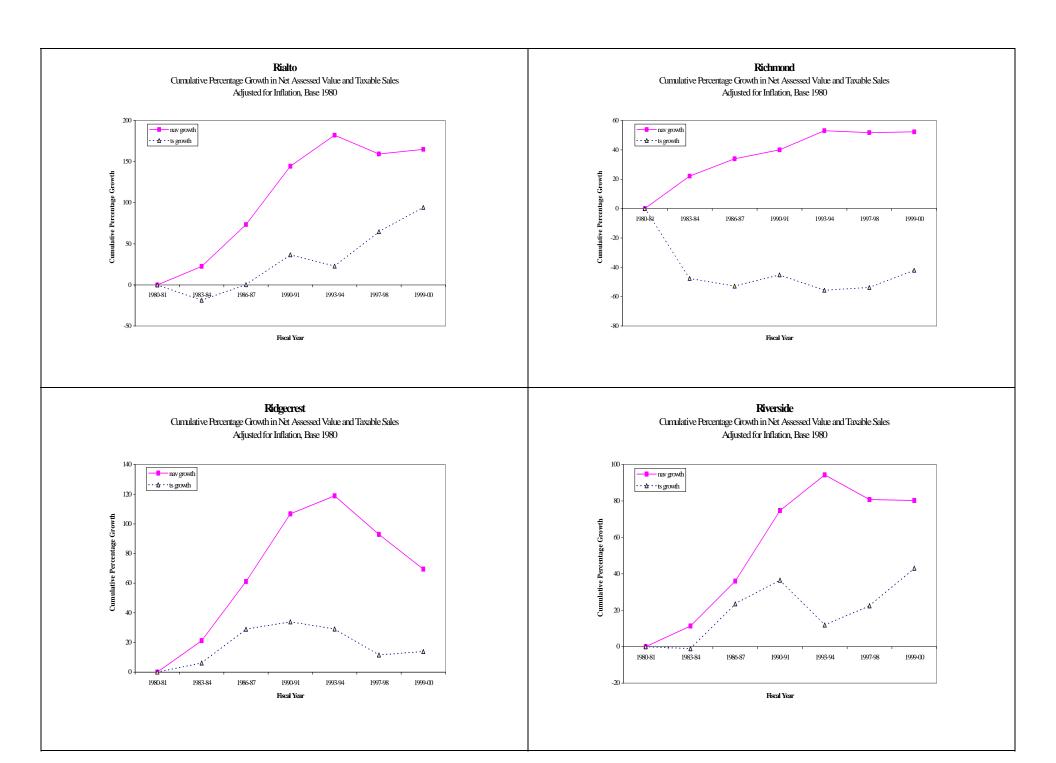


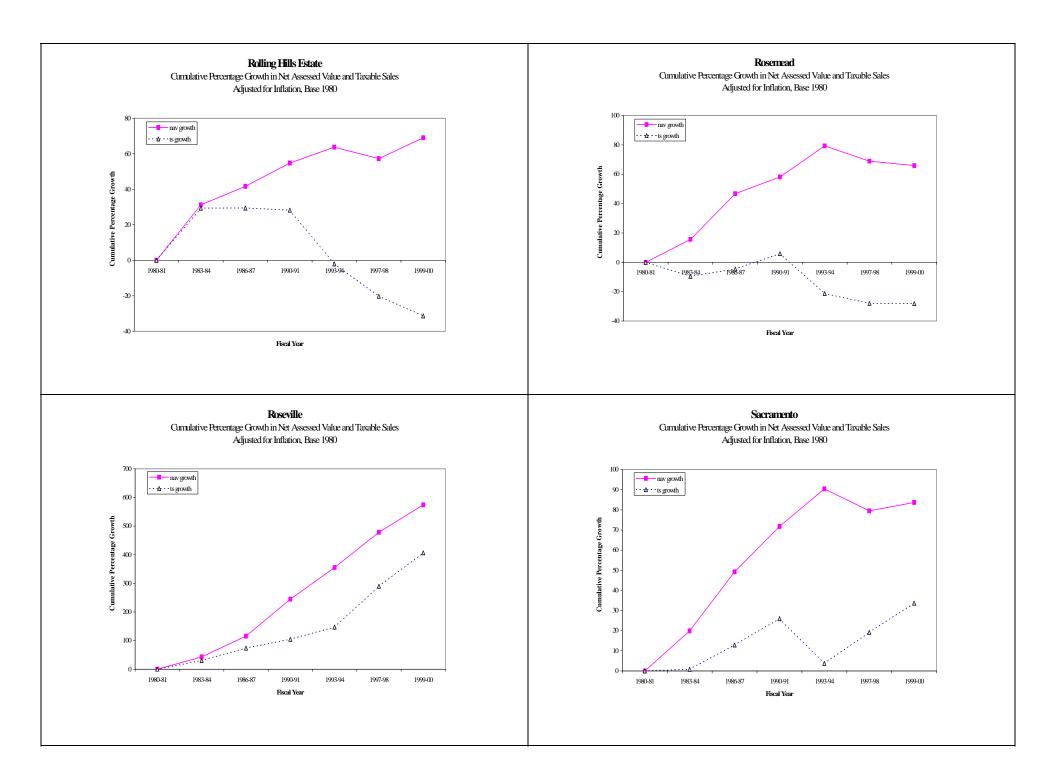
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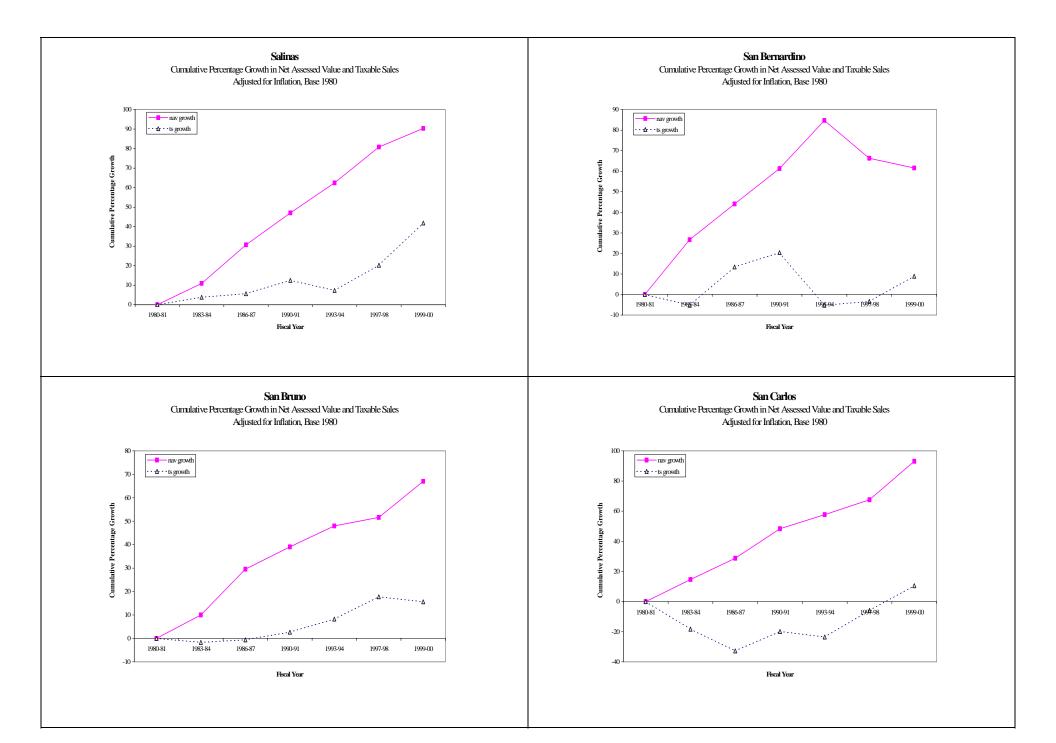


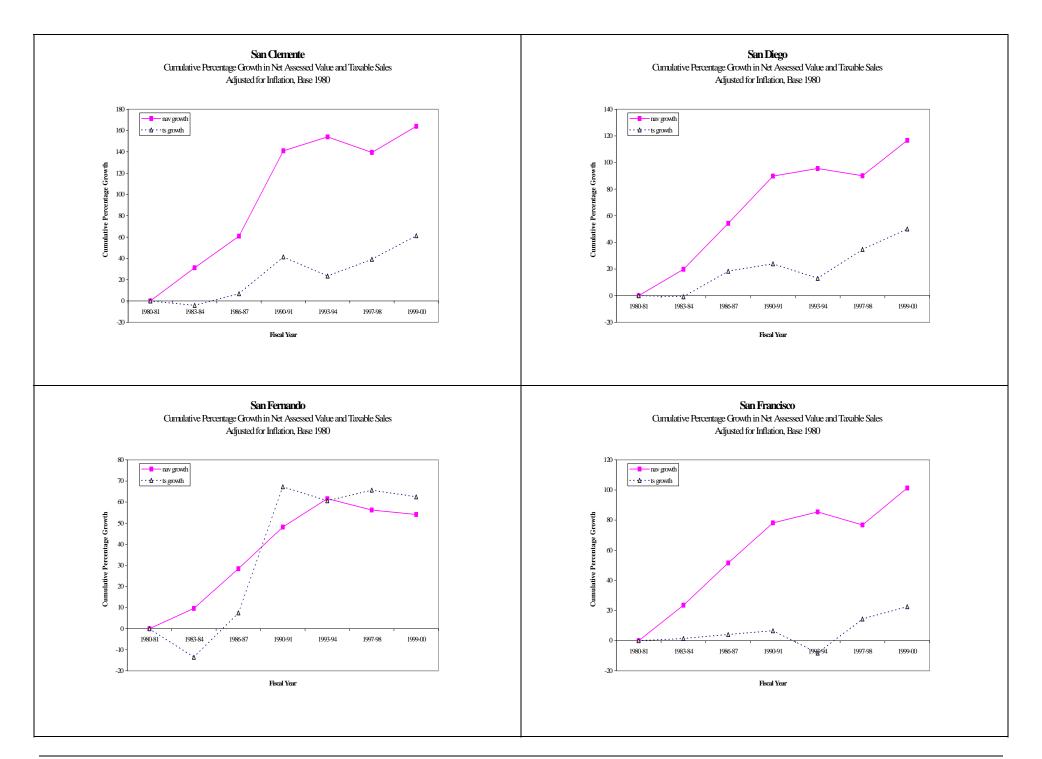


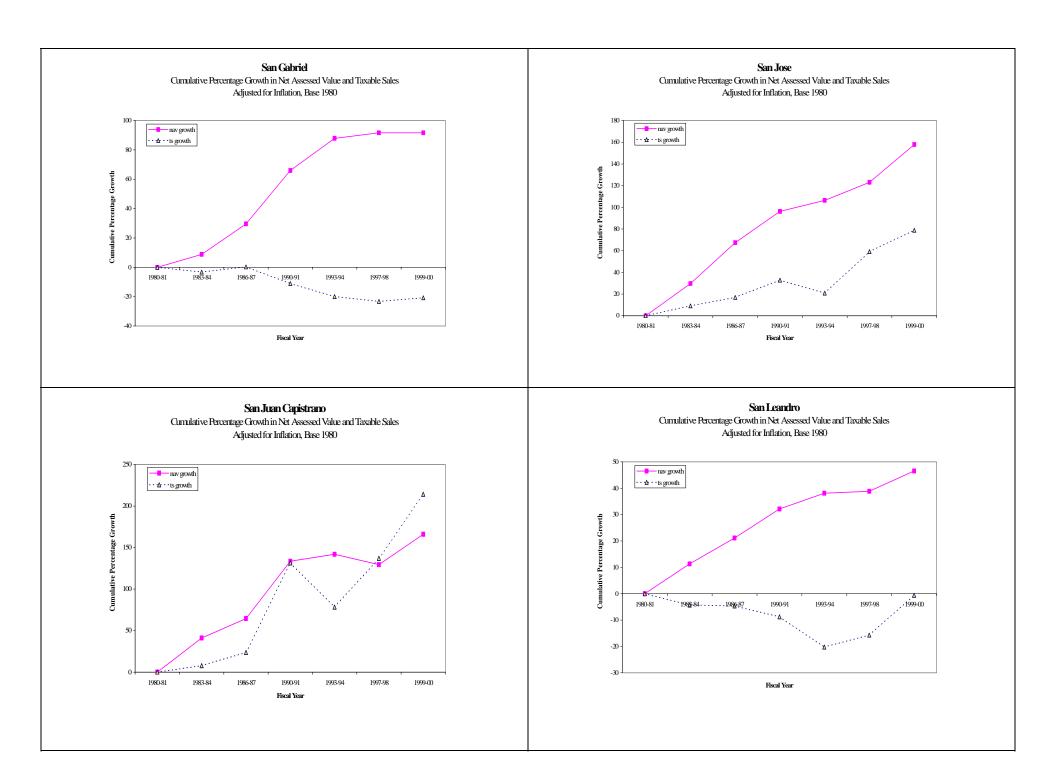


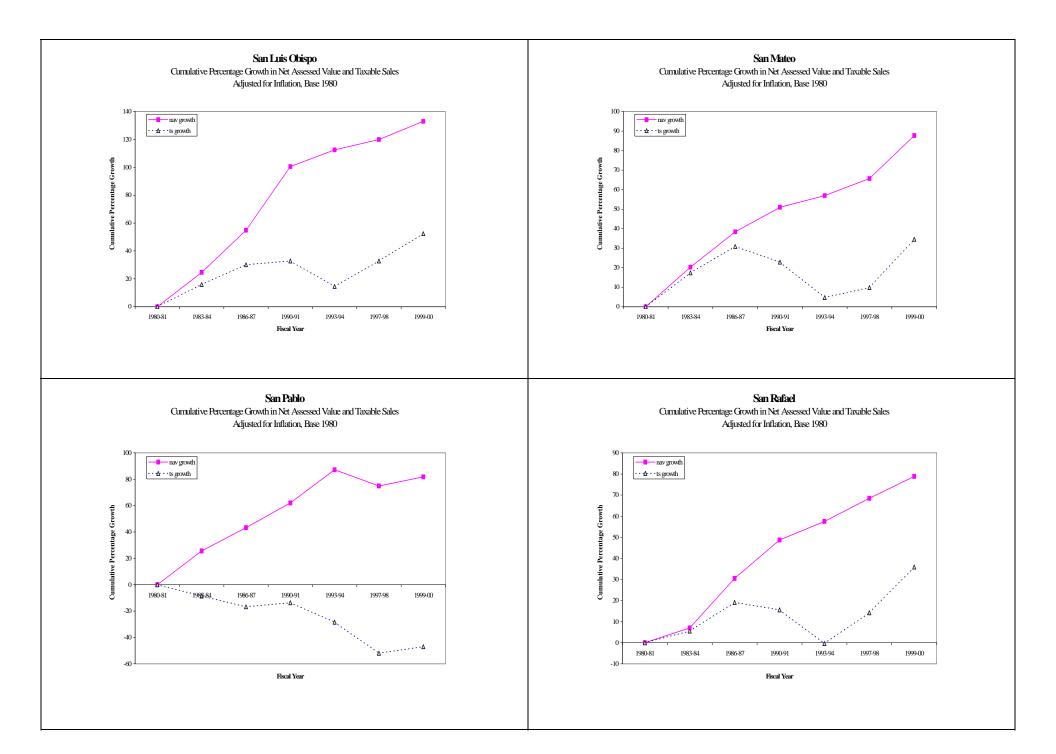






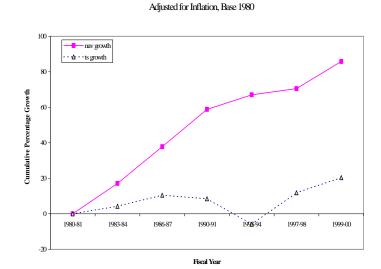




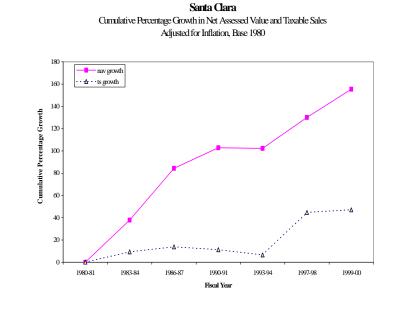


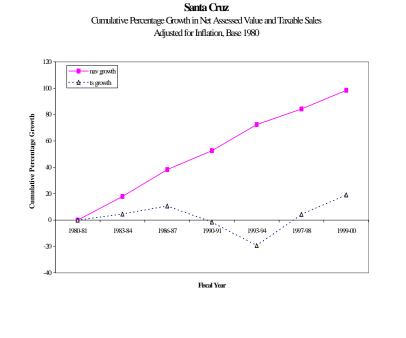
Santa Ana

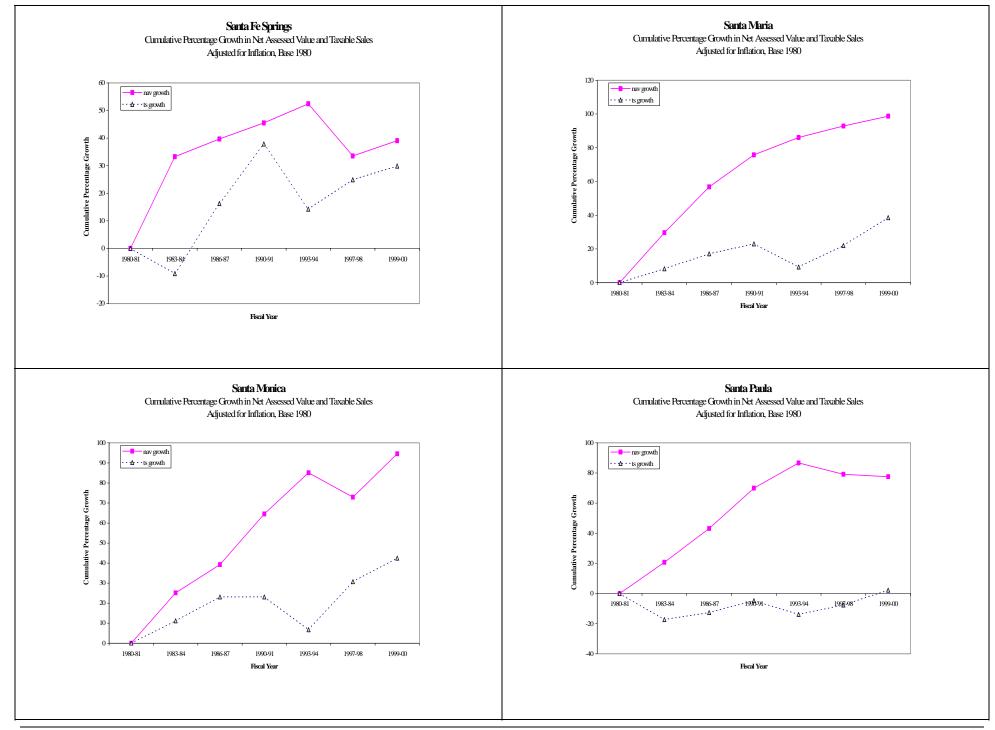
Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

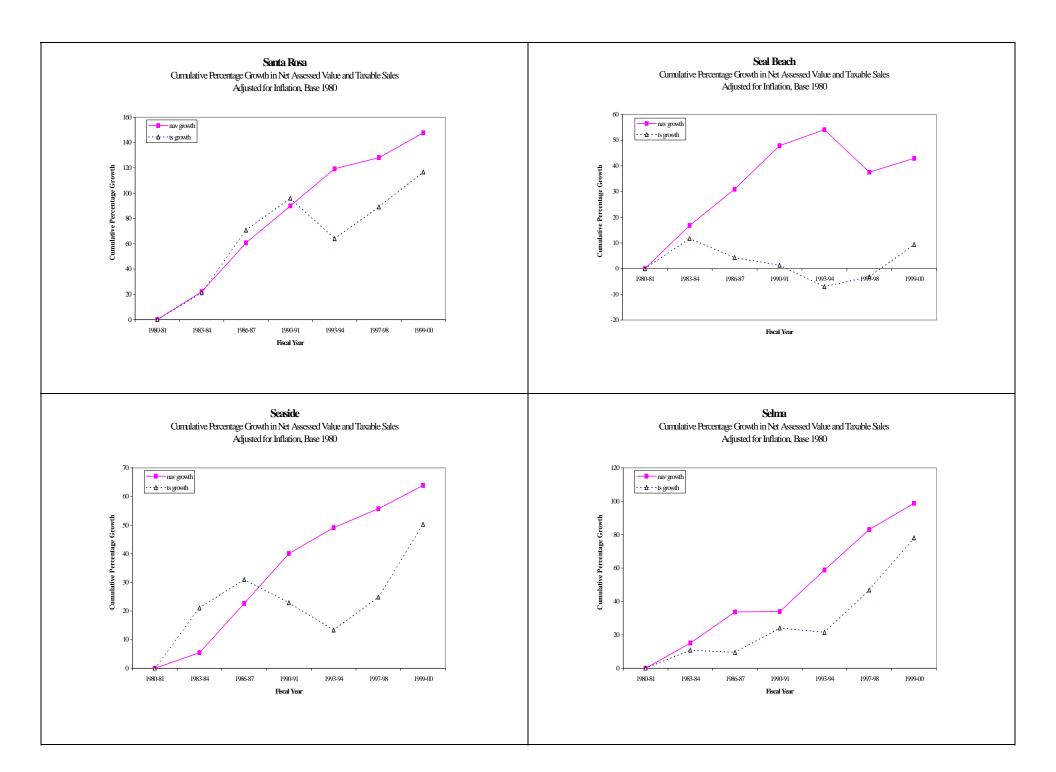


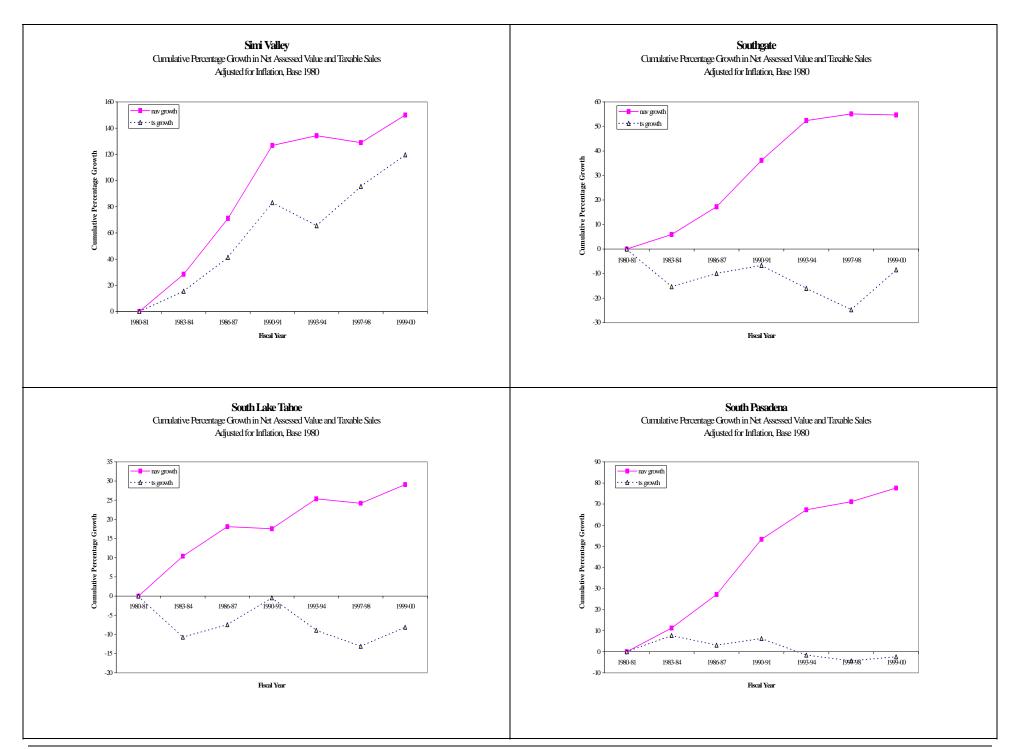
Santa Barbara







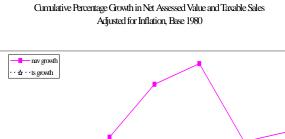




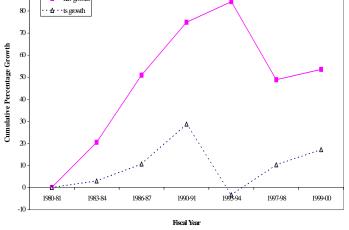
Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 nav growth · ☆ · · ts growth Cumulative Percentage Growth 1993-94 1980-81 1997-98

South San Francisco

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales

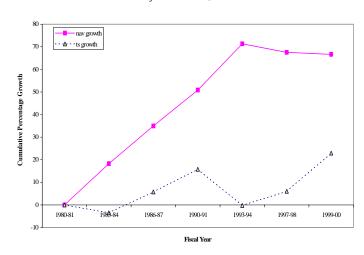


Stanton

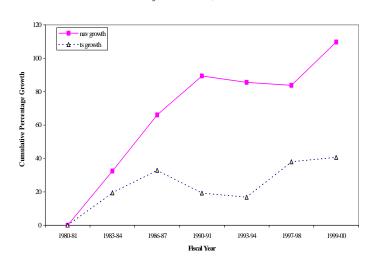


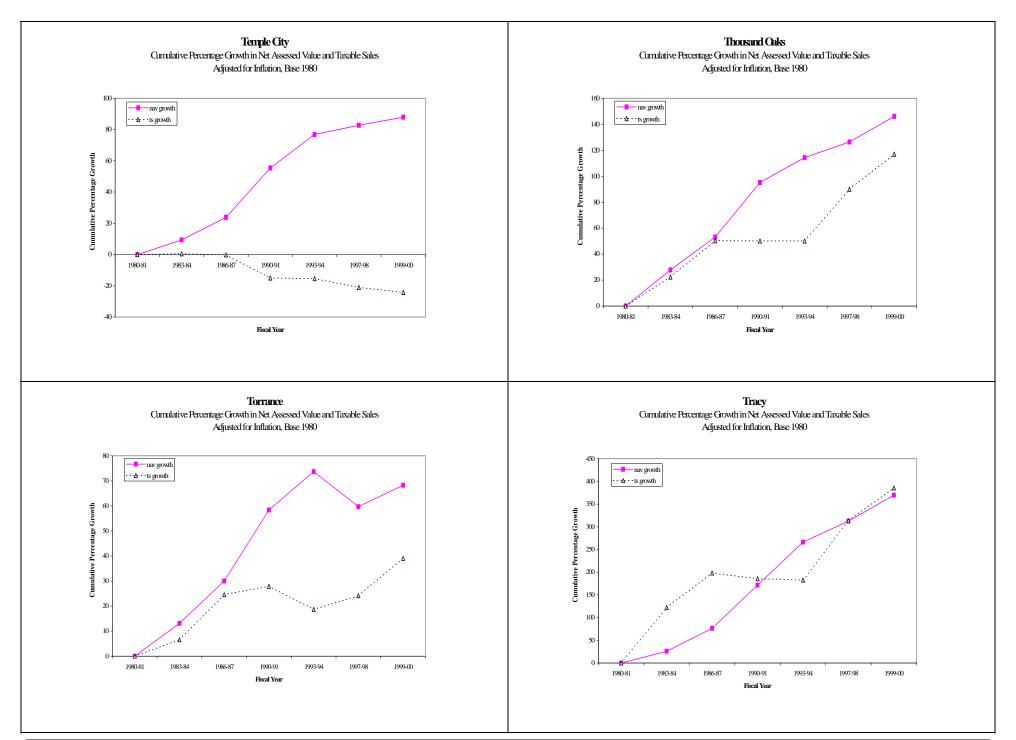
Stockton Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

Fiscal Year



Sunnyvale Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980

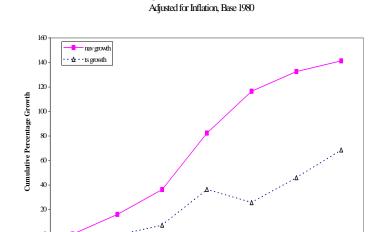




Fiscal Year

Tulare

Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales



1990-91

Fiscal Year

1993-94

1997-98

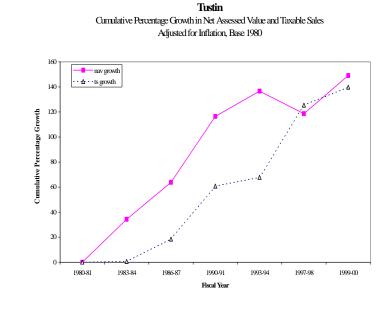
1980-81

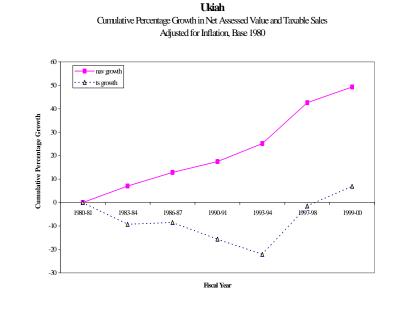
1983-84

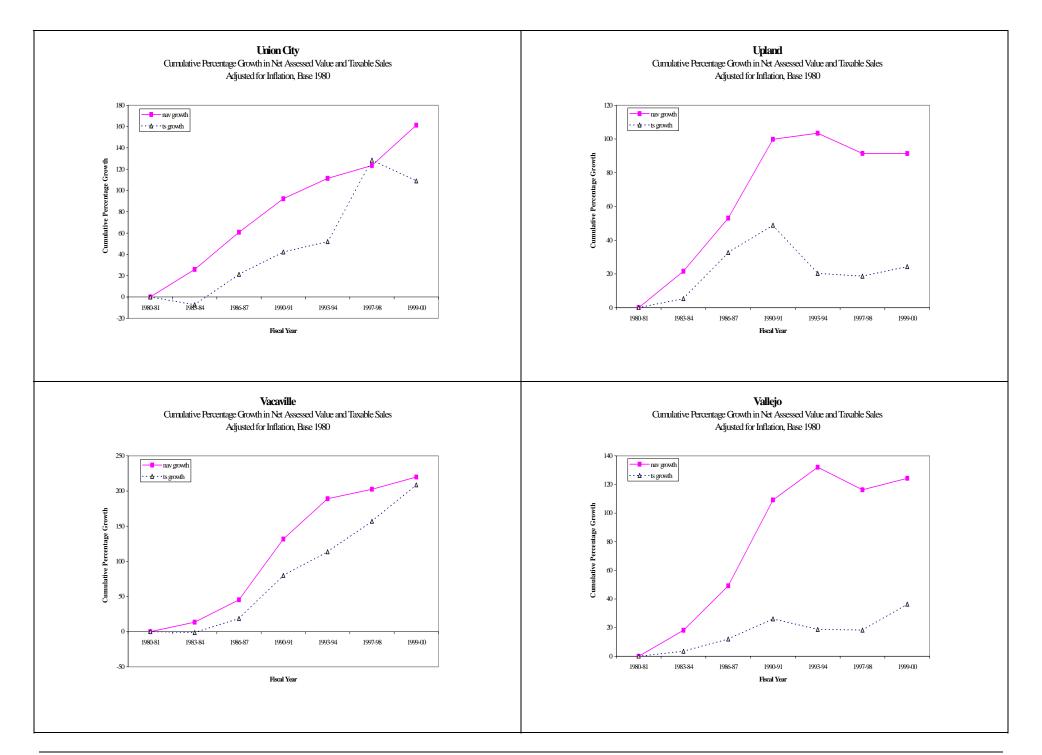
1986-87

1999-00

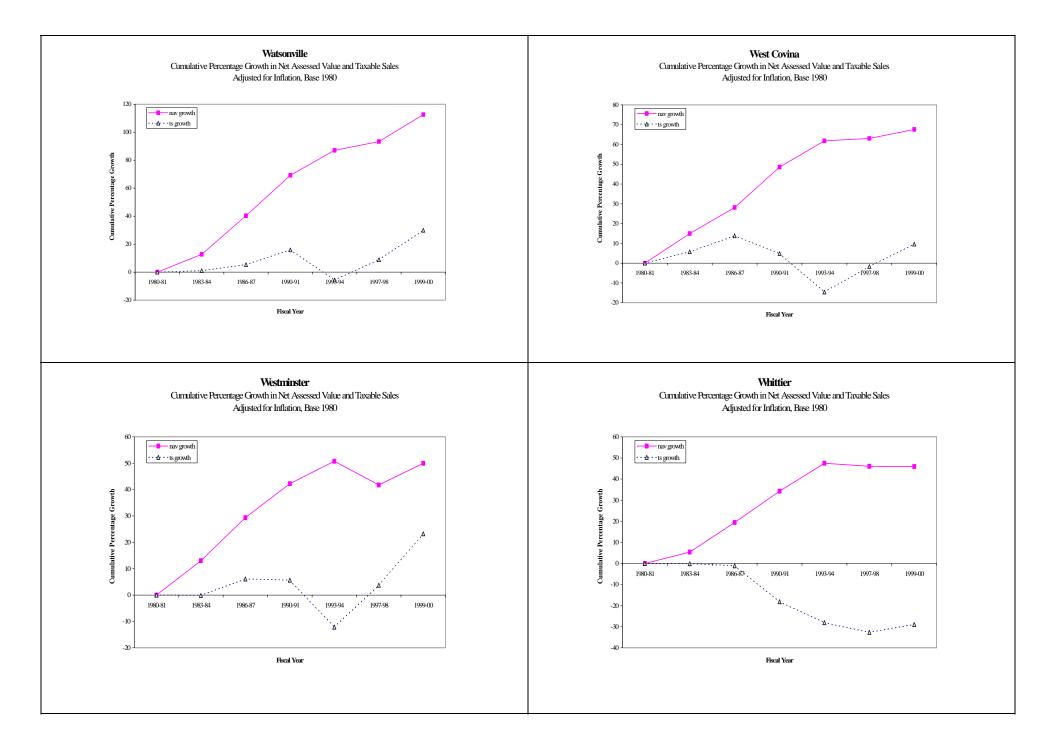
Turlock

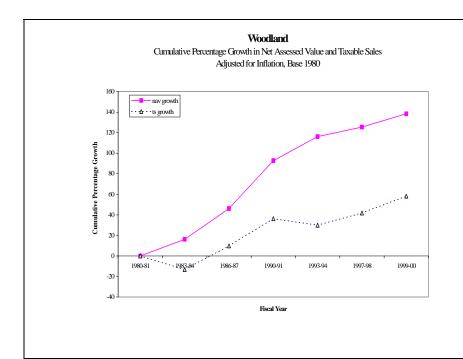


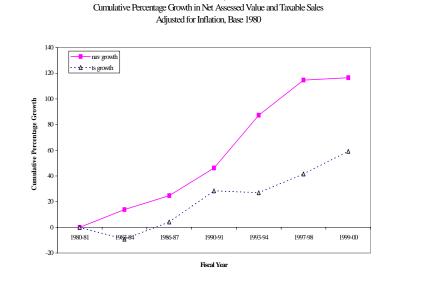




Victorville Visalia Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 nav growth nav growth · ☆ · · ts growth ··- ☆ ··- ts growth 400 -100 Cumulative Percentage Growth Cumulative Percentage Growth 200 100 -1983-84 1990-91 1993-94 1997-98 1999-00 1980-81 1983-84 1986-87 1999-00 1980-81 1990-91 1993-94 1997-98 Fiscal Year Fiscal Year Vista Walnut Creek Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Cumulative Percentage Growth in Net Assessed Value and Taxable Sales Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 Adjusted for Inflation, Base 1980 nav growth nav growth · ☆ · · ts growth ··· **△** ··· ts growth 100 200 Cumulative Percentage Growth Cumulative Percentage Growth 1980-81 1983-84 1990-91 1993-94 1997-98 1999-00 1980-81 1983-84 1986-87 1990-91 1993-94 1997-98 1999-00 Fiscal Year Fiscal Year







Yuba City